

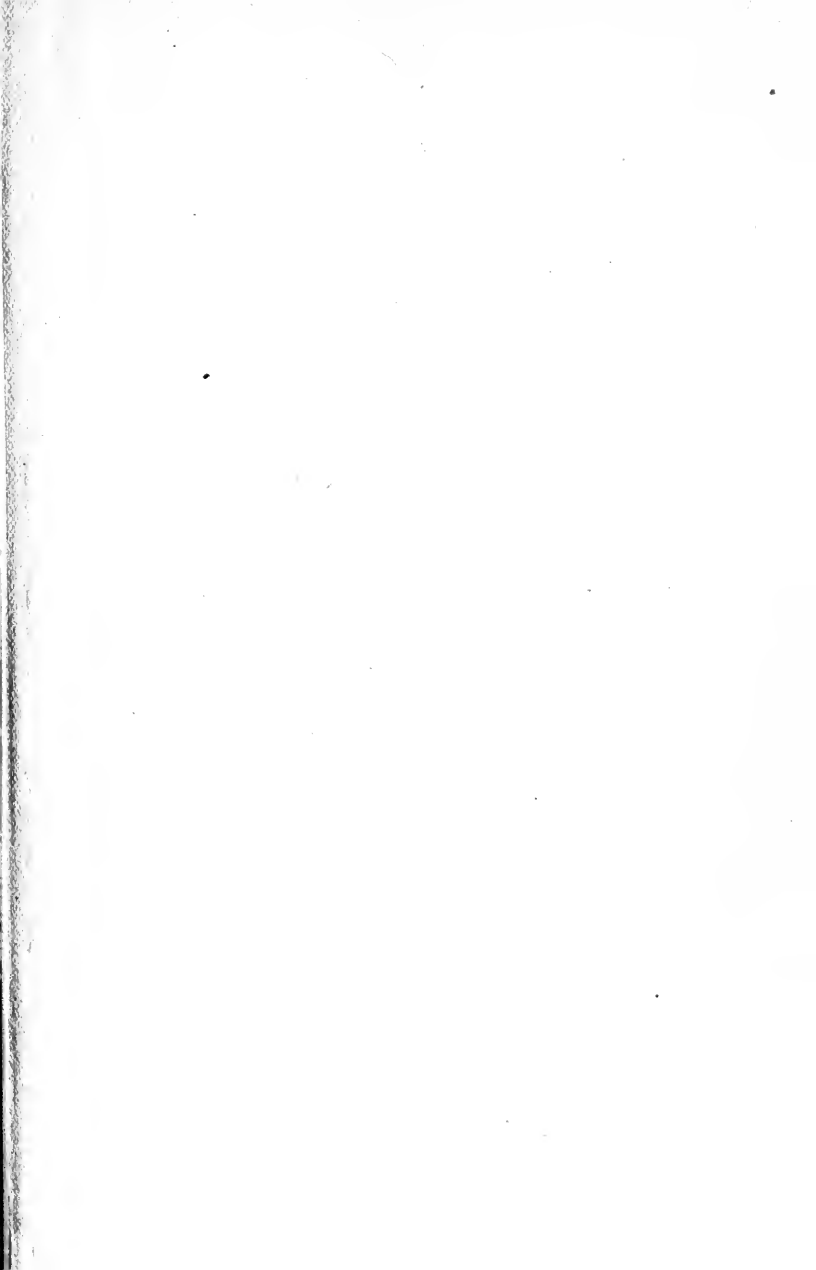


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LETTERS OF
THE WORDSWORTH FAMILY





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LETTERS OF THE
WORDSWORTH FAMILY

FROM 1787 TO 1855

COLLECTED AND EDITED
BY
WILLIAM KNIGHT

IN THREE VOLUMES
VOLUME III

BOSTON AND LONDON
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1907

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CONTENTS OF VOLUME III

1833

PAGE

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH TO ALEXANDER DYCE

DLXIX. Congratulations on D.'s editions of Skelton and Shirley	1
DLXXII. Acknowledges present of D.'s Shirley; the Duchess of Newcastle; Horace Walpole; "Poor Shirley!"; a Cumberland author's catastrophe	5
DLXXIX. Lady Winchelsea again; Skelton's birthplace; another Scotch tour	14
DLXXXV. Comments upon D.'s <i>Specimens of English Sonnets</i> ; British poetesses; Hartley Coleridge's sonnets	24
DXC. Accepts a dedication; inquires about <i>Specimens of English Sonnets</i> ; suggestions for the same	30

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH TO HENRY CRABB ROBINSON

DLXX. Coleridge's health; Dorothy's dangerous condition; not an anti-reformer, but "an anti-bill man"	2
DLXXIII. A book upon Wales; the crisis in public affairs	6
DLXXVI. Dorothy desires a copy of White's <i>Selborne</i>	10
DLXXVII. Dorothy's improvement; travel directions for a tour in the Isle of Man	11
DLXXXIII. A valuable present; "the people bent upon the destruction of their Ancient Institutions"; an unknown admirer	21

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH TO WILLIAM ROWAN HAMILTON

DLXXI. Fervent good wishes for H.'s married life; Aubrey De Vere; mental anxiety has prevented writing poetry	3
DLXXIV. A message to Mrs. Hemans; Dorothy slightly better; Southey and Coleridge ill; commends H.'s sonnets	7

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH TO CHARLES LAMB

- DLXXV. His enjoyment of *Elia*; Titian's "Bacchus and Ariadne"; an encomium upon Dorothy 9

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH TO A NEPHEW¹

- DLXXVIII. Advice in regard to his mental occupations . . . 13

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH TO MRS. HEMANS

- DLXXX. A melancholy visit to Scott 16

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH TO EDWARD MOXON

- DLXXXI. Small sales of his poems in Cumberland 17
DLXXXVIII. Hartley Coleridge's "pot-house wanderings" . 28

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH TO JOHN KENYON

- DLXXXII. John Wordsworth building a parsonage; changes of proprietorship in the Lake District; "a peep at the Hebrides"; fears loss of his stamp distributorship 17

MARY WORDSWORTH TO HENRY CRABB ROBINSON

- DLXXXIV. Desires copies of Scott's *Lay* and *Rokeby* . . . 23

WILLIAM TO JOHN WORDSWORTH²

- DLXXXVI. His interest in the elections; two political epigrams 26

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH TO BASIL MONTAGU

- DLXXXVII. "The rash innovations taking place" 28

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH TO LADY BEAUMONT³

- DLXXXIX. Wishes to see her family; "the impending fate of the Church"; John Wordsworth's parsonage 29

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH TO HENRY TAYLOR

- DXCI. As to double rhymes; proposed publication in *The Quarterly Review* 33

¹ Probably Christopher Wordsworth.

² His nephew.

³ The younger.

CONTENTS OF VOLUME III

vii

1834

PAGE

DOROTHY WORDSWORTH TO LADY BEAUMONT

- DXCII. Her illness; Edith Southey's marriage; a visit from John and her nephew Christopher 34
- DXCIII. The Southey wedding; Edith's husband; memories of Coleorton 36

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH TO SAMUEL ROGERS

- DXCIV. His appreciation of R.'s *Poems* 38

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH TO EDWARD MOXON

- DXCV. Praises Rogers' *Poems*; Milner; Allan Cunningham; Charles Lamb's verses 39
- DCVIII. Reasons for offering his new volume to Longman . 55
- DCXI. Favors monthly publication for his next edition; a postscript by Dorothy introducing Mr. Goodwin 59

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH TO ALLAN CUNNINGHAM

- DXCVI. C.'s writings; his son's edition of Drummond . . . 40
- DCVI. Seldom in London; Mr. Sotheby; his tour in the Highlands; Burns's monument 51

EDWARD QUILLINAN TO SIR EGERTON BRYDGES

- DXCVII. The sales of poetry; Christopher Wordsworth's sons; a visit to Cambridge 41

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH TO JOHN GARDNER

- DXCVIII. A note about his family 43

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH TO MRS. HEMANS

- DXCIX. Regarding the dedication of her *Poems* to him . . . 44
- DCXII. Comments on Mrs. H.'s *Scenes and Hymns of Life* . 59

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH TO HENRY CRABB ROBINSON

- DC. A visit to his son John; a word about the dissenters . . 45
- DCVII. America not worth crossing the Atlantic to see; "an appeal to English dissenters" 53

	PAGE
DOROTHY WORDSWORTH TO MRS. POLLARD	
DCI. Her first outing after her illness	47
WILLIAM WORDSWORTH TO SIR WILLIAM M. GOMM	
DCII. A criticism of Sir W.'s poems	48
WILLIAM WORDSWORTH TO HENRY TAYLOR	
DCIII. "Of the dissolution, or desolation of Parliament" . .	49
DCV. Thanks for two volumes before reading them	51
WILLIAM TO CHRISTOPHER WORDSWORTH ¹	
DCIV. "Convinced that the institutions of the country cannot be preserved"	49
DORA WORDSWORTH TO HENRY CRABB ROBINSON	
DCIX. Acknowledges a present of prints; the Arnolds at Fox How; a postscript by Dorothy	55
WILLIAM WORDSWORTH TO HENRY NELSON COLERIDGE	
DCX. On the death of S. T. Coleridge; a visit from Hartley .	57
DOROTHY WORDSWORTH TO MRS. CLARKSON	
DCXIII. Kept indoors by "autumnal cold and dampness" . .	61
WILLIAM, MARY, AND DOROTHY WORDSWORTH TO HENRY CRABB ROBINSON	
DCXIV. Dora's reading; forebodings concerning political con- ditions; an invitation from Mary and Dorothy	61
WILLIAM WORDSWORTH TO SIR GEORGE BEAUMONT ²	
DCXV. Desires to receive a picture loaned to Lady B. . . .	63
DORA WORDSWORTH TO EDWARD QUILLINAN	
DCXVI. Desires to have Rotha Q. visit her	64

1835

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH TO THOMAS NOON TALFOURD	
DCXVII. On the death of Charles Lamb	65

¹ His nephew.² The younger.

CONTENTS OF VOLUME III

ix

PAGE

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH TO HENRY TAYLOR

DCXVIII. Popular ignorance of political conditions at Rydal 66

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH TO EDWARD MOXON

DCXIX. The national danger from "Radicals and foolish Whigs" 68

DCXXIX. Selecting letters of Lamb for publication; an epitaph 80

DCXXX. Revision of the Lamb epitaph 82

DCXXXIII. Other epitaphs for Charles Lamb; verses on Hogg's death 86

DCXXXIX. Promises a visit to London; Hartley Coleridge's poems 91

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH TO FRANCIS WRANGHAM

DCXX. Requests aid in securing curacy for Thomas Fleming; the deaths of his old friends 68

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH TO ROBERT MONTGOMERY

DCXXI. "One word of literary advice" 72

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH TO ALLAN CUNNINGHAM

DCXXII. Thanks for C.'s *Life of Burns* 72

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH TO HENRY CRABB ROBINSON

DCXXIII. A return home by stagecoach; a friendly critic . 73

DCXXV. Illness of Sarah Hutchinson and of Dorothy . . . 76

DCXXVII. The death of Sarah Hutchinson 77

DCXXVIII. Effects of bereavement upon Dorothy; financial affairs 79

DCXXXI. Mary writes for her husband; plans for R.'s approaching visit; the Lamb epitaph; a few requests 82

DCXXXV. His aversion to post-mortem publication of letters; comments on Lamb's life 88

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH TO H. ROGERS

DCXXIV. On the death of Richard Sharp 75

✓ sent

✓ Lamb
C. C. Lamb
✓ - devot.
to Lamb

	PAGE
WILLIAM WORDSWORTH TO ROBERT SOUTHEY	
DCXXVI. On the death of Sarah Hutchinson	76
MARY WORDSWORTH TO HENRY CRABB ROBINSON	
DCXXXII. An invitation to Rydal Mount; Lamb's letters . . .	85
WILLIAM WORDSWORTH TO BASIL MONTAGU	
DCXXXIV. Resignation to afflictions; his inability to visit London	87
MARY WORDSWORTH TO MRS. MARSHALL	
DCXXXVI. Wordsworth's alterations and corrections . . .	89
DCXXXVII. Dorothy's pet robin	90
DORA WORDSWORTH TO MRS. MARSHALL	
DCXXXVIII. Dorothy gaining ground slowly; her patience . .	90

1836

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH TO ———

DCXL. Lord Lonsdale's proposed endowment of a church at Cockermouth	93
DCLVI. Thanks his correspondent for proofreading his new edition	112

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH TO EDWARD MOXON

DCXLI. Criticisms of Allsop's <i>Coleridge</i>	93
DCXLIV. The verses in memory of Lamb	96
DCXLV. An alteration in a poem	97
DCLXI. Discussing a proposed illustrated edition of the <i>Poems</i>	118
DCLXII. Original features of the new edition of <i>Poems</i> . . .	120

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH TO WILLIAM ROWAN HAMILTON

DCXLII. Bishop Jebb's and Mr. Knox's correspondence; H.'s knighthood	94
DCXLIII. Invites H. to be godfather to his grandson . . .	96

CONTENTS OF VOLUME III

xi

PAGE

MARY WORDSWORTH TO HENRY CRABB ROBINSON

DCXLVI. The Pasleys; the Arnolds; a message from Dora; Wordsworth's interest in a new church for Cockermouth . . .	98
DCLII. A godspeed for R.'s Continental journey . . .	104
DCLVII. Memories of Cottle's sanctum in Bristol; Lamb's <i>Remains</i> ; Mrs. Hemans's <i>Letters</i> . . .	112
DCLX. Desires a visit or a letter from R. . .	118

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH TO HENRY CRABB ROBINSON

DCXLVII. Serjeant Talfourd's copyright bill; a new edition of the <i>Poems</i> ; a poetical squib on Evans . . .	99
DCXLVIII. "Tell Landor to leave the Church alone" . . .	101
DCXLIX. Return thanks for a shipment of books; raising funds for new church at Cockermouth . . .	101
DCLI. Abandons proposed Continental journey planned with R. . .	103
DCLIII. Discusses plans for visiting Rome with R.; an itinerary for a tour of Wales . . .	105
DCLIV. Reasons for deferring the journey to Rome . . .	107

MARY WORDSWORTH TO MRS. MARSHALL

DCL. Dorothy spends half an hour in the garden . . .	103
--	-----

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH TO JOHN KENYON

DCLV. Discussing criticisms of poems; dedication of a chapel . . .	109
--	-----

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH TO THOMAS NOON TALFOURD

DCLVIII. Comments on T.'s <i>Ion</i> ; Lamb's epitaph . . .	115
---	-----

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH TO JAMES MONTGOMERY

DCLIX. Acknowledges copies of M.'s writings; an inscription for a set of his own works . . .	116
---	-----

MARGINAL COMMENTS

(Written by William Wordsworth on manuscript of Barron
Field's "Memoirs")

"Mr. W.'s theory"; the preface to <i>Lyrical Ballads</i> ; his silence on Shakespeare; Pope and Dryden . . .	121
---	-----

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH TO EDWARD MOXON

- DCLXIII. "Quite at ease in regard to the reception which writings will meet with in the end" 123

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH TO R. SHELTON MACKENZIE

- DCLXIV. The equity of copyright to English authors from America 123

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH TO HENRY CRABB ROBINSON

- DCLXV. The consoling power of Christianity; Dr. Arnold and family; plans for approaching travels 124
 DCLXVI. Further arrangements for the trip to Italy 126
 DCLXVII. His itinerary to London to meet R. 127
 DCLXXX. Concerning copyright in America; Barron Field; "Poor dear Kenyon"; Dorothy's *Tour in Scotland*. 144

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH TO ROBERT SOUTHEY

- DCLXVIII. Farewell before leaving England; a letter from Edward Quillinan about Landor's attack on Wordsworth . . . 128

WILLIAM TO MARY WORDSWORTH

- DCLXIX. (*From Toulon*) Travel notes in France 129
 DCLXXIV. (*From Salzburg*) "Absence often pregnant with remorse"; death of Arthur Hallam; a description of the scenery 136
 DCLXXV. (*From Munich*) Considers the tour finished; dissimilarities of his own and Mr. Robinson's tastes 137

WILLIAM TO DOROTHY WORDSWORTH

- DCLXX. (*From Nice*) Olive groves and orange trees; a villa at Cannes 130
 DCLXXI. (*From Rome*) St. Peter's; The Pincian Hill 132
 DCLXXIII. (*From Rome*) A description of his surroundings . . 135

WILLIAM TO MARY AND DOROTHY WORDSWORTH

- DCLXXII. (*From Rome*) His excursions in Rome; Sir George Beaumont's pine tree 133

CONTENTS OF VOLUME III

xiii

PAGE

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH TO HENRY REED

DCLXXVI. Acknowledges R.'s American edition of his *Poems* ; hopes for establishment of English copyright in America . . . 139

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH TO EDWARD QUILLINAN

DCLXXVII. Interest in Portuguese political affairs; Q.'s poetical abilities . . . 140

DOROTHY WORDSWORTH TO ———

DCLXXVIII. "Through God's mercy I am now calm and easy"; Mary Lamb . . . 142

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH TO LORD LONSDALE

DCLXXIX. A few days with the Archbishop of Canterbury at Addington Park . . . 143

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH TO WILLIAM ROWAN HAMILTON

DCLXXXI. Patronage of little use in helping genius forward in the fine arts . . . 147

MARY WORDSWORTH TO MRS. MARSHALL

DCLXXXII. Concerning Wordsworth's epitaph on Charles Lamb . . . 149

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH TO ALEXANDER DYCE

DCLXXXIII. A query about Akenside; Bentley's *Dissertation on the Epistles of Phalaris* ; Southey's library . . . 150

1838

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH TO WILLIAM ROWAN HAMILTON

DCLXXXIV. Never inclined to write criticism; the utility of publishing reflections on Art and Literature through a Royal Society; his labors against foreign piracy on English authors; the copyright laws . . . 152

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH TO ———

DCLXXXV. Sir Uvedale Price's work on ancient metres . . . 156

DCXCIII. Delays in the volume of *Sonnets* ; defects of Gillman's *Life of Coleridge* . . . 166

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH TO EDWARD MOXON

DCLXXXVI. The appeal of his works to the hearts of the people	156
DCXCI. The extension of the term of copyright	164
DCXCV. Home from wandering in Durham and Northumberland	169
DCXCVII. Lord John Russell "a queer creature"	170
DCC. Wishes to avoid overflowing lines in new edition; his nephew John	172

WILLIAM TO JOHN WORDSWORTH ¹

DCLXXXVII. The <i>Sonnets</i> in a single volume; death of Lady Lonsdale; an unpublished sonnet	157
---	-----

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH TO WILLIAM EWART GLADSTONE

DCLXXXVIII. Urges support of Talfourd's copyright bill	159
DCXCIV. Further discussion of agitation	167

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH TO SIR ROBERT PEEL

DCLXXXIX. Soliciting his support of Talfourd's copyright bill	160
DCXC. Further discussion of the copyright law	161

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH TO DANIEL STUART

DCXCII. Errors in Gillman's <i>Life of Coleridge</i> ; his contributions to newspapers	165
--	-----

WILLIAM AND MARY WORDSWORTH TO JOHN KENYON

DCXCVI. Interest in Miss Barrett's <i>Poems</i>	169
---	-----

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH TO MRS. THELWALL

DCXCVIII. Concerning his acquaintance with Mr. Thelwall	170
---	-----

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH TO HENRY CRABB ROBINSON

DCXCIX. The sonnets on Italy; his university honors	171
---	-----

WILLIAM TO DORA WORDSWORTH

DCCI. A remodelled sonnet; another for amusement	173
--	-----

¹ His nephew.

1839

PAGE

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH TO WILLIAM ROWAN HAMILTON

DCCII. "Your poem on the *Elysian Fields*"; "Your sister's poems"; "Alas for your unhappy country"; "this monster" O'Connell 176

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH TO ROBERT SOUTHEY

DCCIII. Urges his signature to petition for Serjeant Talfourd's measure 178

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH TO HENRY REED

DCCIV. Appreciation of R.'s notice of his *Poems* in New York *Review* 179

DCCXI. Thoughts in later life upon the future of his poems . 184

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH TO JOHN KENYON

DCCV. Mrs. Wordsworth's thanks for Miss Barrett's *Poems* . 180

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH TO SERJEANT TALFOURD

DCCVI. "The heartlessness and injustice" of the House of Commons; the need of copyright extension 180

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH TO HENRY TAYLOR

DCCVII. Alterations for two sonnets 182

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH TO HENRY CRABB ROBINSON

DCCVIII. The evils of central organization in government . . 183

DCCIX. "The importance of letters in modern times is much over-rated" 183

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH TO JOHN PEACE

✓ DCCX. The enthusiasm at Oxford on the occasion of his receiving the D.C.L. degree 184

1840

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH TO LADY FREDERICK BENTINCK

DCCXII. The death of his nephew John Wordsworth . . . 187

DCCXXV. A visit from the Queen Dowager 204

	PAGE
DCCXXXII. The return journey from Lowther; a view of Lyulph's Tower	212
DCCXXXIII. The collision of the mail-coach with his carriage	213
WILLIAM TO CHRISTOPHER WORDSWORTH	
DCCXIII. Condolences upon the death of John Wordsworth	187
WILLIAM WORDSWORTH TO BARRON FIELD	
DCCXIV. "Decidedly against the publication of your <i>Memoir</i> "	188
WILLIAM WORDSWORTH TO EDWARD MOXON	
DCCXV. Sketches for illustrations to <i>Poems</i> ; opposition to publishing of Barron Field's manuscript; Hartley Coleridge's <i>Life of Massinger</i>	189
DCCXVII. Hartley Coleridge's unreliability; Mr. Powell's <i>Chaucer Modernised</i>	192
DCCXXI. The sonnets upon capital punishment	197
DCCXXXV. Suggests a new edition of <i>The Excursion</i>	215
WILLIAM WORDSWORTH TO HENRY ALFORD	
DCCXVI. Gratified by A.'s appreciation of his writings	191
WILLIAM WORDSWORTH TO LORD MORPETH	
DCCXVIII. Denies that he ever sought a pension	194
WILLIAM WORDSWORTH TO BENJAMIN ROBERT HAYDON	
DCCXIX. Congratulations upon H.'s lectures at Oxford; what constitutes perfection in Art	195
DCCXXVI. The sonnet on H.'s picture of the Duke of Wellington	205
DCCXXVII. A correction for the same sonnet	207
DCCXXVIII. A further correction for the same	207
DCCXXIX. A discussion of the sonnet; his interest in the abolition of slavery; sitting to Pickersgill	208
DCCXXX. The Wellington sonnet again	210
WILLIAM WORDSWORTH TO HENRY CRABB ROBINSON	
DCCXX. "Poor dear Miss Mackenzie"; "letters sure to be impoverished" by penny postage	196

CONTENTS OF VOLUME III

xvii

PAGE

WILLIAM TO DORA WORDSWORTH AND ISABELLA FENWICK

- DCCXXII. His seventieth birthday; the health of the family;
a homemade doll; a postscript to Miss Fenwick 197

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH TO BENJAMIN DOCKRAY

- DCCXXIII. "Your *Egeria*"; the question of colonial slavery 200

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH TO CHARLES HENRY PARRY

- DCCXXIV. Expresses sympathy for P.'s bereavement in the
death of a daughter 202

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH TO HENRY REED

- DCCXXXI. Will not reprint *The Convention of Cintra* pamphlet
during Wellington's life 211

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH TO JOHN TAYLOR COLERIDGE

- DCCXXXIV. "Certain principles as to flower gardens" . . . 214

1841

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH TO HENRY REED

- DCCXXXVI. His acquaintance with Washington Allston;
Haydon, Wilkie, and Pickersgill contributions to the modern-
ised Chaucer's *Tales* 217
DCCXLIV. Visiting Mrs. Popham in Somersetshire 226
DCCXLVI. Doubtful whether peace can long be preserved in
America; Emerson's essays 229

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH TO JOHN PEACE

- DCCXXXVII. Praises P.'s *Apology for Cathedrals*; Cowper
and Shenstone 219
DCCXLI. An apology for not visiting P. at Bristol 224
DCCXLIII. Announces the marriage of Dora Wordsworth . 226
DCCXLVII. An agreeable tour with "farewell visits for life" 229

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH TO LORD MAHON

- DCCXXXVIII. Replies to objections regarding copyright legislation 221

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH TO EDWARD MOXON

- DCCXXXIX. The proofreading of the 1842 edition of *Poems*; material for a new volume 222
- DCCXLVIII. Regrets the separate publication of the Welling-ton sonnet 230
- DCCLI. Aubrey De Vere's suggestions for a volume of *Selections* 232
- DCCLII. Indignant at printer's charges for corrections; new sonnets 232

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH TO ALEXANDER DYCE

- DCCXL. *The Excursion* improved in the octavo edition 223

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH TO EDWARD QUILLINAN

- DCCXLII. William and Mary Howitt's hospitality in Mrs. Wordsworth's illness at Nottingham; Rotha Quillinan 225
- DCCLIII. The specimens of Chaucer; Tegg's "long and stupid letters" on author's profits 233
- DCCLIV. Criticisms upon Q.'s verses 235

WILLIAM TO CHRISTOPHER WORDSWORTH

- DCCXLV. A visit from Charles Le Grice; his boyhood associations with Coleridge and Charles Lamb 227

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH TO HENRY TAYLOR

- DCCXLIX. A correction for a sonnet; statistics on capital punishment 230

WILLIAM TO CHRISTOPHER WORDSWORTH¹

- DCCL. His brother Christopher's visit 231

EDITORIAL COMMENT

- On correspondence between Wordsworth and Mr. Robert G. Clarke concerning a cheap edition of Moxon's volume of *Selections* 224

¹ His nephew.

CONTENTS OF VOLUME III

xix

1842

PAGE

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH TO JOSHUA STANGER

DCCLV. His memories of the Calvert family 237

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH TO EDWARD MOXON

DCCLVI. The contents of a new volume of verse 238

DCCLIX. Anxious for the correction of certain errors in poems;
his opposition to sending copies to reviewers] 241

DCCLX. Adheres to his resolution against sending copies for
review 243

DCCLXXI. Southey unable to undertake any task-work . . . 253

DCCLXXIV. Hartley Coleridge's delinquencies; Southey's
condition unimproved 255

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH TO JOHN PEACE

DCCLVII. Opposed to P.'s system of punctuation; on the
punishment by death; "a battery of sonnets" 240

DCCLXXIII. "Poor Mr. Wade"; Allston's portrait of Cole-
ridge 254

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH TO HENRY REED

DCCLVIII. Sonnets on *Aspects of Christianity in America* . . 241

DCCLXV. Resigns office in favour of his son William;
American opposition to international copyright 248

DCCLXVI. Sonnets on the marriage ceremony 249

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH TO DORA QUILLINAN

DCCLXI. A letter on his birthday; a funeral; *The Borderers* 243

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH TO THOMAS NOON TALFOURD

DCCLXII. Relative to T.'s proposed vacation among the Lakes 245

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH TO WILLIAM EWART GLADSTONE

DCCLXIII. Relative to action toward a government appropri-
ation for his benefit 246

DCCLXIV. On the same subject 247

DCCLXVII. "Grateful for your exertions to serve me" . . . 250

	PAGE
DCCLXVIII. Sir Robert Peel offers a pension of £300 per annum	250
WILLIAM WORDSWORTH TO ELIZABETH BARRETT	
DCCLXIX. Her sonnet upon Haydon's portrait of Wordsworth	251
JOHN WORDSWORTH TO EDWARD MOXON	
DCCLXX. His father's wishes for the addition of certain sonnets	252
WILLIAM WORDSWORTH TO JOHN TAYLOR COLERIDGE	
DCCLXXII. On the death of Henry Nelson Coleridge; Dr. Arnold's sufferings	253

1843

EDWARD QUILLINAN TO —

DCCLXXV. The death of Southey; Hartley Coleridge safe and well	257
DCCLXXIX. At Southey's funeral with Wordsworth	262

WILLIAM TO CHRISTOPHER WORDSWORTH¹

DCCLXXVI. "Of poor dear Southey's decease"	258
--	-----

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH TO EDWARD MOXON

DCCLXXVII. "The task of correcting"; praise for his printers	259
DCCXCVIII. Mr. Gough's <i>Select Pieces from the Poems</i> . . .	287
DCCXCIX. Extracts for Chambers's "sicky-paddy"	287

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH TO SIR WILLIAM M. GOMM

DCCLXXVIII. The beauties of Rio Janeiro; shipwrecks and the verses on Grace Darling; Southey's funeral	260
--	-----

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH TO HENRY REED

DCCLXXX. "My old friend, Mr. Allston"; Southey's last days and literary remains; the English poets of past ages . .	263
---	-----

¹ His nephew.

- DCCXCI. A spring and summer in the country 274
 DCCXCV. Repudiation in Pennsylvania; Washington Allston 283

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH TO EARL DE LA WARR

- DCCLXXXI. Declining the office of poet laureate 266
 DCCLXXXIV. Accepts the laureateship; "a merely honorary appointment" 269

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH TO LADY FREDERICK BENTINCK

- DCCLXXXII. His declination of the poet laureateship; the verses on Grace Darling 267

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH TO ———

- DCCLXXXIII. Inadvisability of young authors trusting to criticism of elder writers 268

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH TO SIR ROBERT PEEL

- DCCLXXXV. Announcing his acceptance of the laureateship 269

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH TO WILLIAM ROWAN HAMILTON

- DCCLXXXVI. His acceptance of the laureateship; Quillinan's attack upon Landor 270

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH TO JOSEPH COTTLE

- DCCLXXXVII. Asks for letters of Southey for publication . 271
 DCCXCVI. "The momentous subject of Socinianism" . . . 285

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH TO JOHN TAYLOR COLERIDGE

- DCCLXXXVIII. Condolences upon recent losses of kindred 271
 DCCLXXXIX. The plans for Southey's monument at Keswick 272
 DCCXCVII. The Inscription for Southey's monument . . . 285
 DCCCI. Further comment upon the Southey Inscription . . . 289

EDWARD QUILLINAN TO ———

- DCCXC. Miss Fenwick; Wordsworth's failure to attend the Queen's Ball; the *idolatry* of laureate poems 273
 DCCXCII. A visit to Rydal; F. W. Faber in Italy; his religious experiences; Macaulay's criticism; Pope and Addison; a visit from John Wilson 275

	PAGE
DCCXCIII. Suggests a Welsh tour for Wordsworth	280
DCCC. Dining at Rydal; "the invalid's volume sent by Moxon" . . .	288
WILLIAM WORDSWORTH TO RICHARD HENRY DANA	
DCCXCIV. His acquaintance with Washington Allston; comment upon his death	281
WILLIAM WORDSWORTH TO MRS. HENRY ROBINSON	
DCCCII. Regrets his inability to be personally present at her child's baptism; a sponsor's blessing	290
WILLIAM WORDSWORTH TO HENRY ALFORD	
DCCCIII. "Too far advanced in life to venture upon hymns of devotion"	292
WILLIAM WORDSWORTH TO EDWARD MOXON	
DCCCIV. "How widely the poems interest different classes of men"	293
DCCCXI. A public entertainment at Rydal Mount	301
DCCCXII. Errors in the "Biographical Notices" in the <i>Encyclopædia</i>	301
DCCCXVI. The beauty of the Lake scenery	306
EDWARD QUILLINAN TO HENRY CRABB ROBINSON	
DCCCV. "A short letter about nothing for Mrs. Wordsworth" . . .	293
DCCCIX. On <i>Vestiges of the Natural History of Creation</i> . . .	299
WILLIAM WORDSWORTH TO WILLIAM EWART GLADSTONE	
DCCCVI. Comments upon G.'s <i>State and Prospects of the Church</i>	294
WILLIAM WORDSWORTH TO ———	
DCCCVII. An apology for tardy reply; great extent of communications received	297
DCCCXXII. "I feel myself in so many respects unworthy of your love"	311
WILLIAM WORDSWORTH TO LADY FREDERICK BENTINCK	
DCCCVIII. Condolences upon the death of Lord Lonsdale . . .	298

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH TO JOHN PEACE

- DCCCX. Sir Thomas Browne; the proposed monument for Southey in Bristol Cathedral 300

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH TO HENRY REED

- DCCCXIII. A birthday celebration at Rydal Mount; melancholy lack of social relations between the rich and the poor; Keble's dedication; the separate publication of W.'s church poetry unprofitable 302
DCCCXX. A visit to Cambridge; an ovation to the queen at Northampton 309

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH TO HENRY CRABB ROBINSON

- DCCCXIV. His opinions on the Dissenters' Chapels Bill . . 304
DCCCXV. Comments upon the *Life of Dr. Arnold* 305

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH TO D. S. WILLIAMSON

- DCCCXVII. His intent in the Burns festival 306

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH TO ELIZABETH BARRETT

- DCCCXVIII. An acknowledgment of two volumes of her poems 307

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH TO BASIL MONTAGU

- DCCCXIX. Few survivors among his old friends 307

MARY WORDSWORTH TO HENRY REED

- DCCCXXI. Considers Inman's portrait the best likeness of Wordsworth 310

1845

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH TO EDWARD MOXON

- DCCCXXIII. A proposed separate volume of prose writings; Quillinan's literary work 312
DCCCXXIV. Proposes an edition of the poems without prefaces and supplements 313
DCCCXXV. Obligated to attend the Queen's ball at London 313
DCCCXXVII. The enchantment of the Lake District . . . 315

DCCCXXVIII. Dislikes the frontispiece print from Pickersgill	315
DCCCXXXV. The title for a new edition	326
DCCCXXXVII. A call from Miss Martineau	328
DCCCXXXVIII. Faults in an illustration at Rydal Mount .	328
DCCCXL. A generous distributor of the <i>Poems</i>	330

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH TO ———

DCCCXXVI. The <i>Memoirs</i> of B. L. and Lewis Way	313
---	-----

WILLIAM TO CHRISTOPHER WORDSWORTH¹

DCCCXXIX. Acknowledging and commenting upon two pamphlets	316
---	-----

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH TO JOHN MOULTRIE

DCCCXXX. Errors in Bentley's edition of Gray's <i>Poems</i> . .	317
---	-----

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH TO HENRY REED

DCCCXXXI. His reception at court; Mrs. Edward Everett; Samuel Rogers and William Lisle Bowles; Tennyson, "the first of our living poets"; the family circle at Rydal Mount . . .	318
DCCCXXXII. A new edition of the <i>Poems</i> in double column	321
DCCCXXXIII. The new edition in press; travelling with Mrs. Wordsworth; Mr. Inman's portrait	323

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH TO DERWENT COLERIDGE

DCCCXXXIV. On the death of Mrs. Coleridge	325
---	-----

MARY WORDSWORTH TO SARA COLERIDGE

DCCCXXXVI. Wordsworth's memory of first meeting with Southey and Coleridge	327
--	-----

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH TO JOSEPH COTTLE

DCCCXXXIX. Agrees with C. in condemnation of Romanism	329
---	-----

1846

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH TO HENRY REED

DCCCXLI. Promises a copy of a portrait by Haydon; death of a grandson; illness of Christopher Wordsworth	331
--	-----

¹ His nephew.

CONTENTS OF VOLUME III

XXV

PAGE

DCCCXLIII. Critical condition of Mrs. John Wordsworth;
a Mormon convert 333

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH TO BENJAMIN ROBERT HAYDON
DCCCXLII. "Your admirable portrait of my ascent of
Helvellyn" 333

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH TO SIR W. ROWAN HAMILTON
DCCCXLIV. Acknowledges election as honorary member of
the Royal Irish Academy 334

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH TO MRS. CLARKSON
DCCCXLV. Condolences on the death of Thomas Clarkson . 335

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH TO EDWARD MOXON
DCCCXLVI. The publication of Dora's *Journal*; the Brown-
ing marriage 336
DCCCXLVII. The Lord Rectorship of the Glasgow University 337

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH TO SIR WILLIAM M. GOMM
DCCCXLVIII. The monument to Governor Malartie; defeated
for Lord Rectorship of Glasgow with a majority in his favor . 337

1847

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH TO C. B. PHIPPS
DCCCXLIX. Gratified at the Prince Consort's request for
verses for an occasion 339

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH TO T. ATTWOOD WALMSLEY
DCCCL. Alterations made that verse might fit W.'s music . . 339

WILLIAM TO CHRISTOPHER WORDSWORTH¹
DCCCLI. Announcing the death of Dora Quillinan 341

1848

MARY WORDSWORTH TO KATE SOUTHEY
DCCCLII. "What season *now* is not gloomy with us?" . . . 342

¹ His nephew.

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH TO JOHN PRINGLE NICHOL
DCCCLIII. Longfellow's *Evangeline*; the spread of the English language 342

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH TO DAVID LEITCH, M.D.
DCCCLIV. His affection for Applethwaite 343

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH TO JOHN PEACE
DCCCLV. A visit to his birthplace; Cuthbert Southey; resignation to the divine will 344

1849

EDWARD QUILLINAN TO HENRY CRABB ROBINSON
DCCCLVI. Hartley Coleridge's funeral; Clough's poetry; Wordsworth's reminiscences 346
DCCCLVIII. Froude; Mrs. Gaskell; on sonnets and sonneteers; a child's funeral 348
DCCCLIX. "All well, though some of us are sad enough" . 349
DCCCLXI. His admiration of Dr. Channing; "a Christian Unitarian" 350

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH TO JOHN TAYLOR COLERIDGE
DCCCLVII. Hartley Coleridge's last days; "my departed child"; "our consolation" 347

MARY WORDSWORTH TO EDWARD MOXON
DCCCLX. The publication of Southey's letters; a Christmas invitation 350

1850

EDWARD QUILLINAN TO JOHN PRINGLE NICHOL
DCCCLXII. Wordsworth's illness; interest in N.'s *Architecture of the Heavens* 352

1855

MARY WORDSWORTH TO —
DCCCLXIII. Claims a promised visit; wishes to talk of old friends 353

APPENDIX I

PAGE

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH TO ———

1. [No date.] A visit from Lord Lowther 355
 20. [1802.] Recommends books for his brother John; Milton's sonnets 377
 27. [1805.] An account of John Wordsworth's death; his intimacy with him 390
 35. [1819.] His opinion respecting monuments to poets; the injustices of the copyright laws 401

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH TO [WILLIAM MATTHEWS ?]

2. [1794.] Visiting at Penrith; Raisley Calvert's critical condition 355

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH TO JOSEPH COTTLE

3. [1797.] Desires a copy of Dr. Darwin's *Zoönomia* 356
 4. [1797.] Does not need C.'s proposed draft 356
 5. [1797.] "Your offers of pecuniary accommodation"; Coleridge's *Osorio* 357
 7. [1798.] "Rapidly adding to my stock of poetry" 360
 8. [1798.] Desires to talk over plans for publishing 360
 11. [1799.] Requests transfer of Cottle's right to *Lyrical Ballads* 361
 12. [1799.] Relating to adjustment of his account on Cottle's retirement 362
 13. [1799.] Believes the *Ancient Mariner* may have been a detriment to the sale of *Lyrical Ballads* 364
 15. [1799.] Plans for a meeting with C. in the north of England 367

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH TO JAMES LOSH

6. [1798.] The Wedgwoods' liberality to Coleridge; planning a residence in Germany 358

DOROTHY WORDSWORTH TO ———

9. [1798.] William's poems in the press 361
 10. [1798.] The *Lyrical Ballads* printed 361

DOROTHY WORDSWORTH TO THOMAS POOLE

14. [1799.] Her return from Germany; the death of Coleridge's infant child, Berkeley 365

WILLIAM TO DOROTHY WORDSWORTH

16. [1799.] Travelling in the Lake District; first sight of Dove Cottage 368

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH TO SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE

17. [1799.] Arrival at Dove Cottage; describes his journey thither 369

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH TO SOME FRIENDS

18. [1801?] Comments upon his poem, *Resolution and Independence* 374

DOROTHY WORDSWORTH TO MRS. MARSHALL

19. [1802.] At Gallow Hill to attend William's marriage . . . 376
28. [1805.] The character of John Wordsworth; her grief and her consolation; memories of his last visit 392

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH TO WALTER SCOTT

21. [1803.] His return journey to Grasmere; Scott's country; first impressions of Southey 378

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH TO RICHARD SHARP

22. [1804.] Acknowledgment of courtesies to himself and to Coleridge; at work upon *The Prelude* 380
29. [1805.] His anguish over the death of his brother 394

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH TO SIR GEORGE BEAUMONT

23. [1805.] The loss of the *Earl of Abergavenny* with John Wordsworth 382
25. [1805.] Memories of John Wordsworth; his character . . 385
26. [1805.] Reflection upon his bereavement; the true account of the disaster; Aristotle on fortitude 387

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH TO ROBERT SOUTHEY

24. [1805.] Desires S.'s company in his bereavement; "the melancholy account of your own brother's situation" . . . 384

32. [1816.] The metrical construction of the *Thanksgiving Ode*; the review of *The White Doe* in the *Quarterly*. 398
 33. [No date.] His opinion in respect to epic poetry. 400
 39. [1827.] Praises S.'s *Peninsular War*; death of Sir George Beaumont 408
 45. [1828 or 1829.] S.'s tract on *Icon Basiliké*; the disposition of the government towards Ireland 425

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH TO LORD LONSDALE

30. [1809.] "A tract which I have lately written" 395
 38. [1820.] His travels in Switzerland; experiences in Paris . . 405

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH TO BERNARD BARTON

31. [1816.] His appreciation of B.'s poetical panegyric. . . . 396

DOROTHY WORDSWORTH TO SARA COLERIDGE

34. [1818.] Her abilities for long walks 401

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH TO EDWARD MOXON

36. [No date.] A visit from William Cullen Bryant 405
 37. [No date.] A visit from two sons of Robert Burns 405

WILLIAM TO CHRISTOPHER WORDSWORTH¹

40. [1828.] An opinion as to French political conditions . . . 409

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH TO GEORGE HUNTLY GORDON

41. [1828.] *The Triad*; a note on mountain scenery 411
 46. [1829.] "My opinion on the Roman Catholic question" . 426
 47. [1829.] Southey's *Colloquies*; Southey's prose style . . . 427
 49. [1829.] The need of topographical works on Ireland; "the subject of the Poor Laws" 429

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH TO BARRON FIELD

42. [1828.] Explaining in detail his reasons for alterations in certain poems 412

¹ His nephew.

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH TO ALEXANDER DYCE

43. [1828.] William Collins; the spurious lines in the *Highland Ode*. 420

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH TO WILLIAM ROWAN HAMILTON

44. [1829.] Comments upon verses by H., and by F. B. Edgeworth. 423

WILLIAM TO DOROTHY WORDSWORTH

48. [1828.] The dangers of the Established Church in Ireland. . 428

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH TO JAMES STANGER

50. [No date.] Efforts for a new church at Cockermouth; the question of the patronage 430

DOROTHY WORDSWORTH TO CHARLES AND MARY LAMB

51. [1830.] Her nephew John's M.A. degree from Oxford; inquiries concerning Crabb Robinson and Talfourd; family news 432

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH TO JOHN WILSON (Christopher North)

52. [1802.] His pleasure at W.'s appreciation of his poems; a detailed discussion of his poetic principles 435

APPENDIX II

LETTERS TO SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE

FROM WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

1. [1799.] First experiences at Dove Cottage 445
 6. [1808.] Vexatious miscarriage of his letters to C.; exertions in behalf of the Green orphans; *The White Doe* 464
 7. [1809.] The effect of ill health upon C.'s work; fears possible prosecutions for expressions in *The Convention of Cintra* pamphlet; the arrangement of his published poems 468

FROM WILLIAM AND DOROTHY WORDSWORTH

2. [1801?] A humorous account of home trifles ; an affectionate postscript from Dorothy 451
3. [1802.] A stormy journey ; *The Glow-worm* 453
5. [1804.] Solicitude for C.'s health and welfare ; *The Prelude* ; the family circle ; Dorothy's *Journal* ; William's anxiety over C.'s condition ; corrections for the copy of verses 460

FROM WILLIAM, DOROTHY, AND MARY WORDSWORTH

4. [1804.] Dorothy copying William's poems for C. ; neighbourhood happenings and rambles ; baby John ; William's progress with *The Prelude* ; a blessing from Mary 456

LETTERS OF
THE WORDSWORTH FAMILY

1833

DLXIX

William Wordsworth to Alexander Dyce

RYDAL MOUNT, KENDAL, Jan. 7, 1833.

My dear Sir,

Having an opportunity of sending this to town free of postage, I write to thank you for your last obliging letter. Sincerely do I congratulate you upon having made such progress with Skelton, a writer deserving of far greater attention than his works have hitherto received. Your edition will be very serviceable, and may be the occasion of calling out illustrations, perhaps, of particular passages from others, beyond what your own reading, though so extensive, has supplied. I am pleased also to hear that Shirley is out.

. . . I lament to hear that your health is not good. My own, God be thanked, is excellent; but I am much dejected with the aspect of public affairs, and cannot but fear that this nation is on the brink of great troubles.

Be assured that I shall at all times be happy to hear of your studies and pursuits, being, with great respect,

Sincerely yours,

WM. WORDSWORTH.

DLXX

William Wordsworth to Henry Crabb Robinson

Feb. 5, 1833.

My dear Friend,

Many thanks for your letter. My son, as you conjecture, has no desire to be a member of the University Club, so let his name be struck off. There must, I think, be some mistake in your account of poor Coleridge. He is *still* confined to his bed, you say. Perhaps the word ought to have been *again* confined, for not long ago he was at Highgate New Church, attending divine service the day it was consecrated. We have also heard of his being out several times. His daughter, Mrs. Henry Coleridge, has been for some time suffering from a sad derangement of nerves.

We rejoice to hear that the Lambs are well; pray give our kindest love to them. . . . My dear sister has not left her room for five weeks, and scarcely her bed but to return to it. She is, you will grieve to hear, deplorably weak, and cannot, we fear, remain long with us. But do not speak of this to anybody, further than to say that she is very poorly. . . . The origin of her complaint was imprudent exposure during a long walk, when she lived with her nephew in Leicestershire three years ago. But no more of this sad subject. I am come to that time of life when I must be prepared to part with or precede my dearest friends; and God's will be done. . . .

You mistake in supposing me an anti-reformer. *That* I never was, but an anti-bill man, heart and soul. It is a fixed judgment of my mind that an unbridled democracy is the worst of all tyrannies. Our Constitution had

provided a check for the democracy, in the Royal Prerogative influence and power, and in the House of Lords, acting directly through its own body, and indirectly by the influence of individual Peers, over a certain portion of the House of Commons. The old system provided in practice a check, both without and within. The extinction of the nomination-borough has nearly destroyed the internal check. The House of Lords as a body have been trampled upon by the way in which the bill has been carried, and they are brought to that point that the Peers will prove useless as an external check; while the regal power and influence has become, or soon will become, mere shadows.

She opened, but to shut
Excelled her power,

as your friends, the bill-men of all denominations have found, or soon will find.

Ever affectionately yours,

W. WORDSWORTH.

DLXXI

William Wordsworth to William Rowan Hamilton

RYDAL MOUNT, February 8, 1833.

In reply to the communication made me in your last, let me express my fervent wishes that your marriage may be attended with all the blessings you expect from it; and in this wish my family unite, not excepting my poor sister, whose life is but a struggle from day to day.

In my letter to Miss Hamilton I sent you a message of thanks for the poems, and Mr. De Vere's ode.¹ Pray assure him that I am duly sensible of the honour he has done me in his animated verses, a copy of which was also sent me by Miss Rice.

Your lecture I have read with much pleasure. It is philosophical, and eloquent, and instructive, and makes me regret — as I have had a thousand occasions of doing — that I did not apply to mathematics in my youth. It is now, and has long been, too late to make up for the deficiency.

I fear that Mr. Coleridge is more than usually unwell: a letter from a London friend informs me that he is still confined to his bed. I hope, however, there is some mistake here, as not very long ago he attended at the consecration of Highgate Church, and had a long conversation with the Bishop of London, who officiated upon that occasion.

It seems a shame to tax you with postage for this letter, and I know not how to get it franked; and even still less do I feel able to make it interesting by any agreeable matter. With regard to poetry, I must say that my mind has been kept this last year and more in such a state of anxiety that all harmonies appear to have been banished from it except those that reliance upon the goodness of God furnishes:

Tota de mente fugavi
Haec studia atque omnes *delicias* animi.²

This must be my excuse for writing after so long an interval a letter so dull. But believe me under all circumstances, etc. . . .

¹ In 1832 Aubrey de Vere issued a madrigal, beginning "May is the bridal of the year." In 1819 he published an *Ode to April*. — Ed.

² Catullus, *Carm.* lxxviii, *Ad Mallium*, v. 25. — Ed.

DLXXII

William Wordsworth to Alexander Dyce

RYDAL MOUNT, March 20, 1833.

My dear Sir,

I have to thank you for the very valuable present of Shirley's works, just received. The preface is all that I have yet had time to read. It pleased me to find that you sympathised with me in admiration of the passage from the Duchess of Newcastle's poetry; and you will be gratified to be told that I share the opinion you have expressed of that cold and false-hearted Frenchified coxcomb, Horace Walpole.

Poor Shirley! what a melancholy end was his! and then to be so treated by Dryden! One would almost suspect some private cause of dislike, such as is said to have influenced Swift in regard to Dryden himself.

Shirley's death reminded me of a sad close of the life of a literary person, Sanderson by name, in the neighbouring county of Cumberland. He lived in a cottage by himself, though a man of some landed estate. His cottage, from want of care on his part, took fire in the night. The neighbours were alarmed; they ran to his rescue; he escaped, dreadfully burned, from the flames, and lay down (he was in his seventieth year) much exhausted under a tree, a few yards from the door. His friends, in the meanwhile, endeavoured to save what they could of his property from the flames. He inquired most anxiously after a box in which his manuscripts and published pieces had been deposited with a view to a publication of a laboriously corrected edition; and, upon being told that the box was consumed, he expired in a

few minutes, saying, or rather sighing out the words, "Then I do not wish to live." Poor man! Though the circulation of his works had not extended beyond a circle of fifty miles' diameter perhaps at furthest, he was most anxious to survive in the memory of the few who were likely to hear of him.

The publishing trade, I understand, continues to be much depressed, and authors are driven to solicit or invite subscriptions, as being in many cases the only means for giving their works to the world.

I am always pleased to hear from you; and believe me, my dear sir,

Faithfully, your obliged friend,

WM. WORDSWORTH.

DLXXIII

William Wordsworth to Henry Crabb Robinson

May 5, 1833.

My dear Friend,

. . . Let me beg of you to do me a small service in one of your walks, as early as convenient. This morning I have received a letter from Mr. Dewhurst [16 William Street, Waterloo Bridge, Lambeth], who gives a wretched account of himself and his affairs, and requests me to subscribe to a book of his upon whales, and other creatures of the arctic regions. I have no money that can be well spared, and nothing can be more out of my way, but this poor man seems so heavily distressed, not being able to pay even the postage of his letter, that I beg you would call at his house and put my name down, and you shall be repaid by the first opportunity. How he has fallen

into such distress I cannot guess, as his subscription is numerous and of the first respectability. . . .

Public affairs are going on just as I apprehended. Nothing, I am persuaded, but a course of affliction will bring back this nation to its senses ; and when it recovers, then it will be a long time under the necessity of sacrificing liberty to order, probably under a military government, but at least under one unavoidably despotic. It would give me much pleasure to talk over these matters with you. . . .

A neighbour of ours, Mr. Hamilton, author of a novel called *Cyril Thornton*, has in the press the result of a year's tour in America. . . .

DLXXIV

*William Wordsworth to Sir William Rowan
Hamilton*

RYDAL MOUNT, May 8, 1833.

. . . My letters being of no value but as tokens of friendship, I waited for the opportunity of a frank, which I had reason to expect earlier. Sincerely do we all congratulate you upon your marriage. . . . We look with anxiety to your sister Eliza's success in her schemes, but for pecuniary recompense in literature, especially poetical, nothing can be more unpromising than the present state of affairs, except what we have to fear for the future.

If you ever see Mrs. Hemans, pray remember me affectionately to her, and tell her that I have often been, and still am, troubled in conscience for having left her obliging letter so long unanswered ; but she must excuse me,

as there is nothing in my mind urging me to throw any interest into my letters to friends beyond the expression of kindness and esteem, and *that* she does not require from me. . . . News you do not care about, and I have none for you except what concerns friends. My sister, God be thanked, has had a respite. She can now walk a few steps about her room, and has been borne twice into the open air. Southey, to whom I sent your sonnets, had, I grieve to say, a severe attack about ten days ago; but he is now, I believe, perfectly recovered. Coleridge, I have reason to think, is confined to his bed, his mind vigorous as ever. Your sonnets, I think, are as good as anything you have done in verse. We like the second best, and I single it out the more readily, as it allows me an opportunity of reminding you of what I have so often insisted upon, the extreme care which is necessary in the composition of poetry.

The ancient images shall not depart
From my soul's temple, the refined gold
Already proved remain.

Your meaning is that it "shall remain," but, according to the construction of our language, you have said "it shall not";

the refined gold,
Well proved, shall there remain —

will serve to explain my objection. Could you not take us in your way when coming or going to Cambridge? If Mrs. H. accompanies you, we shall be glad to see her also. I hope that in the meeting about to take place in Cambridge there will be less of mutual flattery among the men of Science than appeared in that of the last year in Oxford. Men of Science in England seem inclined to

copy their fellows in France, by stepping too much out of their way for titles and baubles of that kind, and for offices of state and political struggles which they would do better to keep out of. With kindest regards to yourself and Mrs. H., and to your sisters, etc. . . .

DLXXV

William Wordsworth to Charles Lamb

RYDAL MOUNT, Friday, May 17.

My dear Lamb,

I have to thank you and Moxon for a delightful volume, not I hope your last, of *Elia*. I have read it all, except some of the popular fallacies which I reserve, not to get through my cake all at once. The book has much pleased the whole of my family. . . . They all return their best thanks. I am not sure but I like the "Old China" and "The Wedding" as well as any of the Essays. I read "Love me and love my dog" to my sister this morning. . . . She was much pleased; and, what is rather remarkable, this morning, also, I fell upon an anecdote in Madame D'Arblay's life of her father, where the other side of the question is agreeably illustrated. The heroes of the tale are David Garrick and a favourite little spaniel of King Charles's breed, which he left with the Burneys when he and Thomas Garrick went on their travels. In your remarks upon Martin's picture I entirely concur. May it not be a question whether your own imagination has not done a good deal for Titian's "Bacchus and Ariadne." With all my admiration for that great artist, I cannot think that either Ariadne or Theseus look so well on his canvas as they ought to do. . . .

[Of his sister, after referring to her illness, he said]: In tenderness of heart I do not honestly believe she was ever exceeded by any of God's creatures. Her loving-kindness has no bounds. God bless her for ever and ever.

DLXXVI

William Wordsworth to Henry Crabb Robinson

Friday, May 20, 1833.

My dear Friend,

Having an opportunity of sending this note to London, I write with a request from my sister that you would bring down for her a copy of White's *Natural History of Selborne*, which she has long wished to possess. The book as originally published was in quarto, entitled *Natural History and Antiquities of Selborne*, but the Antiquities being of less general interest, have not in many editions been reprinted. I think I have seen an edition of the *Natural History*, by Sir William Jardine, advertised, with notes and a few engravings. This is probably the book which would best suit my sister, and I believe it is not expensive. Alaric Watts used to send me his souvenirs, and as the last year's contained a sonnet of mine on the departure of Sir Walter Scott for Naples, I hoped they would have sent me a copy as an acknowledgment, which they have not done, though I wrote a few weeks ago to tell them I have not received such a thing. Perhaps they have it prepared to send down. If so, be so good as to bring it. . . .

Faithfully yours,

W. W.

DLXXVII

William Wordsworth to Henry Crabb Robinson

RYDAL MOUNT, Wednesday, June 5th, 1833.

My dear Friend,

. . . There is quite time enough for your trip to the Isle of Man, which my sister thinks, for other reasons (as it falls in your way), it would be worth your while to make, only I must observe that there is only one fixed conveyance, and that by steam, between the Isle of Man and Whitehaven; but there are fishing smacks and private traders going very frequently, especially in the summer season. . . .

We are truly sorry for Mr. Gilman's state of health, and Charles Lamb's account of his sister is most deplorable. Poor fellow! what he has to endure, and surely, on his own account, his situation near his sister in such a place must be doleful.

My dear sister is, upon the whole, considerably better. She can walk about twenty or thirty steps, but always with exhaustion. Nevertheless, when the weather is favourable she is wheeled about in a chair for an hour or two in the garden. . . .

To account for the wretched penmanship, I must tell you that I have been using a hatchet this morning for a long time, which has made my hand shake.

Ever affectionately yours,

WM. WORDSWORTH.

P.S. — As to the Isle of Man, I write from my sister's dictation, who has been there.

There is a pleasant road from Douglas to Ramsay. Manghold Head is on the right; go to the church, and along the cliffs, or steep. Go from Ramsay direct to Bishop's Court, avoiding the Point of Ayre, which is flat and wholly uninteresting. From Peel to Castletown, back to Douglas, which is all my sister has seen; but I should be inclined to ascend from Laxey to the Snæfell, the highest point of the island. Our sister Joanna Hutchinson is in lodgings at Ramsay; it would give her and us great pleasure that you should see each other. Mr. and Mrs. Cookson-Kendal, friends once, driven by reverse of fortune to the island for economy's sake, are now at Balla-salla, near Castletown. They would also be glad to see you; but do not put yourself to inconvenience on either account. With respect to the attractions of the Isle of Man, my sister does not think them sufficient to justify a long journey, but as they fall in your way, she thinks the place worth looking at for you. My son John lives at Moresby, three miles on this side of Whitehaven. His house is small, and having visitors he could not offer you a bed; but he and his amiable wife would be truly happy to see you, and make you acquainted with my grandchild. He would also, most likely, be able to accompany you on your way towards Keswick in his little carriage. . . . At Whitehaven by all means see the new pier. And as you were so unfortunate in weather the last time you were here, pray go to Keswick by way of Loweswater, Scale Hill, and Buttermere, and by Honister Crag into Borrowdale. At Scale Hill there is a good inn, and at Buttermere also. But John will direct you, and, I hope, accompany you part of the way.

DLXXVIII

*William Wordsworth to a Nephew*¹

RYDAL MOUNT, June 17, 1833.

My dear C——,

You 'are welcome to England after your long ramble. I know not what to say in answer to your wish for my opinion upon the offer of the lectureship.

. . . I have only one observation to make, to which I should attach importance if I thought it called for in your case, which I do not. I mean the moral duty of avoiding to encumber yourself with private pupils in any number. You are at an age when the blossoms of the mind are setting, to make fruit; and the practice of pupil-mongering is an absolute blight for this process. Whatever determination you come to, may God grant that it proves for your benefit; this prayer I utter with earnestness, being deeply interested, my dear C——, in all that concerns you. I have said nothing of the uncertainty hanging over all the establishments, especially the religious and literary ones of the country, because if they are to be overturned, the calamity would be so widely spread that every mode of life would be involved in it, and nothing would survive for hopeful calculation. . . .

¹ Doubtless Christopher Wordsworth. — Ed.

[NOTE: The letter to Alexander Dyce, upon the following page, was evidently written in 1831, as Sir Walter Scott died in 1832. It should therefore have been printed to follow Letter DXXXIV, on page 450 of Volume II, but the error was not discovered until after the plates of both volumes had been made. — Ed.]

DLXXIX

*William Wordsworth to Alexander Dyce*¹

LOWTHER CASTLE, July 23d.

My dear Sir,

I have put off replying to your obliging letter till I could procure a frank; as I had little more to say than to thank you for your attention as to Lady Winchelsea, and for the extracts you sent me.

I expected to find at this place my friend, Lady Frederick Bentinck, through whom I intended to renew my request for materials, if any exist, among the Finch family, whether manuscript poems, or anything else that would be interesting; but Lady Frederick is not likely to be in Westmorland. I shall, however, write to her. Without some additional materials, I think I should scarcely feel warranted in venturing upon any species of publication connected with this very interesting woman, notwithstanding the kind things you say of the value of my critical remarks.

I am glad you have taken Skelton in hand, and much wish I could be of any use to you. In regard to his life, I am certain of having read somewhere (I thought it was in Burns's *History of Cumberland and Westmorland*, but I am mistaken), that Skelton was born at Branthwaite Hall, in the county of Cumberland. Certain it is that a family of that name possessed the place for many generations; and I own it would give me some pleasure to make out that Skelton was a brother Cumbrian. Branthwaite Hall is about six miles from Cockermouth, my native place. Tickell (of the *Spectator*), one of the best of our minor poets, as Johnson has truly said, was born within two

¹ See note on preceding page.

miles of the same town. These are mere accidents, it is true, but I am foolish enough to attach some interest to them.

If it would be more agreeable to you, I would mention your views in respect to Skelton to Mr. Southey : I should have done so before, but it slipped my memory when I saw him. Mr. Southey is undoubtedly much engaged, but I cannot think that he would dislike a letter from you on any literary subject. At all events, I shall, in a few days, mention your intention of editing Skelton, and ask if he has anything to suggest.

I meditate a little tour in Scotland this autumn, my principal object being to visit Sir Walter Scott ; but as I take my daughter along with me, we probably shall go to Edinburgh, Glasgow, and take a peep at the Western Highlands. This will not bring us near Aberdeen. If it suited you to return to town by the Lakes, I would be truly glad to see you at Rydal Mount, near Ambleside. You might, at all events, call on Mr. Southey on your way. I could prepare an introduction for you, by naming your intention to him. I have added this, because my Scotch tour would, I fear, make it little likely that I should be at home about the 10th of September. Your return, however, may be deferred.

Believe me, my dear sir,

Very respectfully, your obliged

W. WORDSWORTH.

P.S. — I hope your health continues good. I assure you there was no want of interest in your conversation on that or any other account.

DLXXX

William Wordsworth to Mrs. Hemans

RYDAL MOUNT, Aug. 20, 1833.

. . . The visit which occasioned the poem addressed to Sir Walter Scott,¹ that you mention in terms so flattering, was a very melancholy one. My daughter was with me. We arrived at his house on Monday noon, and left it at the same time on Thursday, the very day before he quitted Abbotsford for London, on his way to Naples. On the morning of our departure he composed a few lines for Dora's album, and wrote them in it. We prize this memorial very much, and the more so as an affecting testimony of his regard at the time when, as the verses prove, his health of body and powers of mind were much impaired and shaken. You will recollect the little green book which you were kind enough to write in on its first page.

Let me hope that your health will improve, so that you may be enabled to proceed with the sacred poetry with which you are engaged. Be assured that I shall duly appreciate the mark of honour you design for me in connection with so interesting a work. . . .

¹ *Yarrow Revisited.*—Ed.

DLXXXI

William Wordsworth to Edward Moxon

LOWTHER CASTLE, August, 1833.

. . . There does not appear to be much genuine relish for poetical literature in Cumberland, if I may judge from the fact of not a copy of my poems being sold there by one of the leading booksellers, though Cumberland is my native county. Byron and Scott are, I am persuaded, the only *popular* writers in that line. . . .

Pray remember me very affectionately to Charles Lamb, and to his dear sister, if she be in a state to receive such a communication from her friends. . . .

Ever, my dear Mr. Moxon,

Faithfully yours,

W. WORDSWORTH.

DLXXXII

William Wordsworth to John Kenyon

RYDAL MOUNT, Sept. 23d, [1833.]

My dear Mr. Kenyon,

Your letter was most welcome. It is truly agreeable to be told in this unexpected way that one still lives in the memory of one's friends. We should have replied earlier, but your letter reached us when Mrs. Wordsworth's mind was much depressed by the death of her eldest brother, and as for myself, I have been and still am unable to write because of my old enemy, inflammation in my eyes.

. . . Upon the banks of the Derwent, two miles below Cockermouth, my native town, my son¹ is now building a parsonage house upon a living, somewhat under £200 a year, to which he was lately presented by my honoured friend the Earl of Lonsdale; and I am still simple and fanciful enough to draw pleasure from the thought of his child culling flowers and gathering pebbles upon the banks of the same stream that furnished me with the like delights sixty years ago.

So in the passing of a day, doth pass
Of mortal life the bud, the leaf, the flower.

I congratulate you upon the noble conduct of your brother, which is quite of a piece of all we know of him. I wish he could have spared a fortnight for this country before his return to Germany. He would be welcome under this roof. Mr. Southey also esteems him much, and would have been pleased to see him. May we not hope, upon some future occasion, when your sister's health is recovered, that we may welcome you and Mrs. Kenyon also?

It is mortifying that so many persons, indifferent, or disagreeable to us, should take furnished houses in this vale, and we never have a glimpse of you here, in that way, or any other. There is an opening preparing, and let me tell you of it, with an entreaty that you and Mrs. Kenyon would take it into serious consideration.

Within three quarters of a mile of Rydal Mount on the banks of the stream that flows between the Lakes of Rydal and Windermere, Dr. Arnold, Master of Rugby School, is building a house for himself and his family

¹ His son John, to whom a daughter had been born, Jane Stanley Wordsworth. — Ed.

to retire to during the summer and winter vacations; so that it will not be wanted by the owner more than ten weeks in the year; and I can scarcely doubt that he would let it on very reasonable terms to an eligible tenant, and none could be more so than yourselves, during the time he does not want it. You would then have every accommodation, and no obligation be incurred. The pleasure this would be to us, I need not speak of.

In the way of chat I may tell you that great changes are going on in the proprietorships of the Lake district. Mr. Marshall's second son, who is — as probably you know — the Member for Leeds, has purchased the Greenwich hospital estate at Keswick, and is Lord of Derwentwater. This morning he invited me to meet him at Keswick, which I cannot do, for my advice in some new plantations which he meditates; so that we hope the beauty of the country will not suffer from this princely estate falling into his hands. At the head of Windermere Mr. Redmaine, a silk mercer of Bond Street, has purchased five hundred acres, including the residences of Brathay Hall, and old Brathay, once occupied by Sir George Beaumont, and afterwards by Charles Lloyd; previously, while the Lakes were an unvisited corner of the world, by two flashy brothers, named Westren, who came hither to skulk, and were hanged for highway robbery. The silk mercer will have command of some miles of the shore of Windermere, and what he will do thereupon is perhaps better known in Bond Street than with us; but we tremble.

You speak of your own troubles, and allude to mine: It is true, as was affirmed in an offensive paragraph in a Glasgow paper, that I have been taking a peep at the Hebrides. My tour, which was only for a fortnight, included the Isle of Man (visited for the first time), Staffa,

Iona, and a return through Burns's country, Renfrewshire and Ayrshire. The weather was mixed, but upon the whole I and my companions — Mr. Robinson, an ex-barrister, and my son John — were well repaid.

About ten days after my return I was summoned to Carlisle upon business, took Mrs. Wordsworth with me, and we went up the banks of the Eden, by Corby and Nunnery—both charming places—to Lowther, and home by Ullswater. These two excursions united, have since produced twenty-two sonnets, which I shall be happy to read you; the more so because I cannot muster courage to publish them, or anything else. I seem to want a definite motive. Money would be one, if I could get it, but I cannot. I find by my publisher's account, which I received the other day, that the last edition of my poems owes us conjointly (my share being two thirds) nearly £200. The edition was two thousand, of which not quite four hundred had been sold last June; which is wholly inexplicable, notwithstanding the depressed state of the book market in England, unless we take into consideration the injury done by the Paris edition, of which the sale, as we have reason to believe, has been very large. At all events, those Paris publications, morally piratical, are extremely hurtful to those successful writers, whose comfort — not to say their livelihood — at all depend upon the profits of their works.

I am truly happy that you are independent of West Indian changes and revolutions. The Stamps and Taxes, as you are aware, are about to be consolidated, as the Boards already have been. The result will not improbably be either the abolition of the office of Distributor of Stamps, or such accumulation of labour and responsibility, with diminished remuneration, as would make the

place for me no longer worth holding. This I should regret principally because Willy, whose history you know, and my excellent clerk — who has served me for upwards of twenty years — would both be left suddenly without provision or employment; but we must bear, for I fear worse things are coming to us. My feelings at Lowther lately called forth the following sonnet, which Mrs. Wordsworth will transcribe. Our dear sister is stronger, and is now being driven out by Dora in our little phaeton. . . .

DLXXXIII

William Wordsworth to Henry Crabb Robinson

[Postmark, Nov. 15th, 1833.]

My dear Friend,

Your valuable present has arrived, valuable for its own sake, and still more for the most friendly and affectionate terms in which the gift is recorded by your own pen. The book furthermore will be of great use to us, who have not access to many original authorities. We have placed it upon the third shelf from the bottom, in the first compartment of the bookcase (nearest the door) in the drawing room, where the sixteen volumes look substantially handsome. Southey's books have been forwarded. If I had had the use of my eyes, I would have taken the liberty to skim them, before I had parted with them!

. . . My opinion is, that the people are bent upon the destruction of their ancient Institutions; and that nothing since, I will not say the passing, but since the broaching of the Reform Bill could or can prevent it. I would bend my endeavours to strengthen to the utmost the rational portion of the Tory party, but from no other

hope than this, that the march towards destruction may be less rapid by their interposing something of a check ; and the destruction of the monarchy thereby attended with less injury to social order. They are more blind than bats or moles, who cannot see that it is a change or rather an overthrow of social order, as dependent upon the present distribution of property which is the object of the Radicals. They care nothing what may be the form of government, provided the changes may lead to that. As to France, and your *juste milieu*, it is not worth talking about [and I, M. W.,¹ will not write another word on this subject]. . . .

Did we tell you that Mr. Hamilton is to be married to Lady Farquhar ere long ?

A fortnight ago I received a letter from an unknown person who signs himself Thomas Forbes Kelsall—dated Fareham, Hants—whose attention had been attracted by a notice in Lockhart's memoir of Sir Walter Scott of my MS. poem of *Yarrow Revisited*—professing himself to have been an early admirer of my works, and having derived great benefit from them—and understanding that this poem was not likely soon to see the light, he, with many apologies for the liberty, requested that I would favour him with a copy ; adding that, upon the honour of an English gentleman, he would confine the perusal to one or two of his particular friends. . . .

We were delighted to have so good an account of the Lambs. Give our kindest love when you see them, and tell Lamb that his works are our delight, as is evidenced better than by words, by April weather of smiles and

¹ Mary Wordsworth was amanuensis for her husband in this letter. — Ed.

tears whenever we read them. Mr. Kenyon's book has pleased me exceedingly, and surprised me still more. I never suspected him of being a sinner in verse-writing. The work does him great credit, less as a whole, than from the spirit of particular parts. Christians, however, will justly think that tolerance is carried too far by a philosophy that places all creeds so much upon the same footing. God bless you, say we all. . . . Farewell.

Most affectionately yours,

W. WORDSWORTH.

DLXXXIV

Mary Wordsworth to Henry Crabb Robinson

RYDAL MOUNT, Nov. 23d, [1833.]

My dear Friend,

. . . If it should fall in your way to pick up for me, dog cheap, the quarto edition of the *Lay of the Last Minstrel*, and of *Rokeby*, I should be well pleased ; as I do not think that these should be absent from a poet's house. We have copies of Sir Walter's other larger poems.

We have already found your valuable present most useful, and now that the hall is our sitting room, we take a walk to look at them upon their shelves very often.

Let us hear from you, and believe me to be sincerely and affectionately yours,

M. WORDSWORTH.

DLXXXV

William Wordsworth to Alexander Dyce

RYDAL MOUNT, Dec. 4, 1833.

My dear Sir,

Your elegant volume of sonnets,¹ which you did me the honour to dedicate to me, was received a few months after the date of the accompanying letter; and the copy for Mr. Southey was forwarded immediately, as you may have learned long ago by a letter from himself. Supposing you might not have returned from Scotland, I deferred offering my thanks for this mark of your attention; and about the time when I should otherwise probably have written, I was seized with an inflammation in my eyes, from the effects of which I am not yet so far recovered as to make it prudent for me to use them in writing or reading.

The selection of sonnets appears to me to be very judicious. If I were inclined to make an exception it would be in the single case of the sonnet of Coleridge upon Schiller,² which is too much of a rant for my taste. The one by him upon Linley's music³ is much superior in execution; indeed, as a strain of feeling, and for unity of effect, it is very happily done. I was glad to see Mr. Southey's *Sonnet to Winter*. A lyrical poem of my own, upon the disasters of the French army in Russia, has so striking a resemblance to it, in contemplating winter under two aspects, that—in justice to Mr. Southey,

¹ *Specimens of English Sonnets*. — Ed.

² Its title was *To the Author of 'The Robbers'* (1794). — Ed.

³ *Lines to W. Linley, Esq., while he sang a song to Purcel's music* (1800). — Ed.

who preceded me — I ought to have acknowledged it in a note; and I shall do so upon some future occasion.

How do you come on with Skelton? And is there any prospect of a new edition of your *Specimens of British Poetesses*? If I could get at the original works of the elder poetesses, such as the Duchess of Newcastle,¹ Mrs. Behn,² Orinda,³ etc., I should be happy to assist you with my judgment in such a publication; which, I think, might be made still more interesting than this first edition, especially if more matter were crowded into a page. The two volumes of *Poems by Eminent Ladies*, Helen Maria Williams's⁴ works, Mrs. Smith's⁵ sonnets, and Lady Winchelsea's poems, form the scanty materials which I possess for assisting such a publication.

It is a remarkable thing that the two best ballads, perhaps, of modern times, viz. *Auld Robin Grey*,⁶ and the *Lament for the Defeat of the Scots at Flodden-field*,⁷ are both from the pens of females.

I shall be glad to hear that your health is improved, and your spirits good, so that the world may continue to be benefited by your judicious and tasteful labours.

¹ Margaret Cavendish (1624 ?–1674), author of *Poems and Fancies* (1653), *Plays* (1672), etc., etc. — Ed.

² Aphra Behn (1640–1689), dramatist and poet, probably the first woman in England to live by her pen. — Ed.

³ Mrs. Katherine Fowler Philips (1631–1665), letter writer and poet, known as the “matchless Orinda,” translated Horace, and two of Corneille's plays. — Ed.

⁴ (1762–1827.) Author of *Edwin and Eltruda* (1782). *Poems* (1786), etc., etc. — Ed.

⁵ Charlotte Smith (1749–1806), *Elegiac Sonnets* (1797). — Ed.

⁶ Written by Lady A. Lindsay. — Ed.

⁷ That beginning “I've heard them liting at the ewe-milking,” by Jane Elliot. — Ed.

Pray let me hear from you at your leisure ; and believe me, dear sir,

Very faithfully yours,

W. WORDSWORTH.

P.S. — It is a pity that Mr. Hartley Coleridge's sonnets had not been published before your collection was made,¹ as there are several well worthy of a place in it. Last midsummer I made a fortnight's tour in the Isle of Man, Staffa, Iona, etc., which produced between thirty and forty sonnets, some of which, I think, would please you.

Could not you contrive to take the Lakes in your way, sometimes, to or from Scotland? I need not say how glad I should be to see you for a few days.

What a pity that Mr. Heber's² wonderful collection of books is about to be dispersed!

DLXXXVI

*William Wordsworth to John Wordsworth*³

Wednesday, December 5, [1833.]

My dear John,

The last Cambridge paper proved to us very interesting, especially to your dear aunt, my wife, who is a keen electioneerer. Who is to be set up against Lubbock, now that Peel is retired? We of this family will be mortified above measure if you do not triumph over any upstart.

¹ They were published by Mr. Bingley in 1833. — Ed.

² Bishop Reginald Heber (1783-1826), author of *Palestine*, and many hymns. — Ed.

³ His nephew. — Ed.

Here follows an epigram for you, allusive to the testimonials of the astronomical professor :

For Lubbock vote — no legislative hack
The dupe of history — that “ old almanack ”;
The sage has read the stars with skill so true,
The almanack he ’ll follow must be new.

. . . I cannot get up my spirits ; everything seems going against sober sense, patience, and justice. Should the epigram give you no pleasure, the following, which I threw off this morning, may perhaps make a little amends.

ADDRESSED TO REVOLUTIONISTS OF ALL CLASSES

If this great world of joy and pain
Revolve in one sure track,
If what has set will rise again,
And what is flown come back ;
Woe to the purblind crew that fill
The heart with each day’s care,
Nor learn from past and future, skill
To bear and to forbear.

Pray find a moment to tell us how you all are. Love to yourself and Charles, and to your dear father. God bless him. He’s a good man and true. If you think it worth while to print the epigram don’t tell that I wrote it. Your most affectionate friend and uncle,

W. WORDSWORTH.

DLXXXVII

William Wordsworth to Basil Montagu

December 9, 1833.

. . . It gives me pleasure to learn that you are disposed to resist the rash innovations which are taking place on all sides of us. Heaven grant that the efforts of those who think like you may be sufficient to stem the torrent that threatens to sweep away everything before it. It is *principles* of government and society that ought mainly to be looked at. . . . God bless you. . . .

DLXXXVIII

William Wordsworth to Edward Moxon

[Postmark, December 9th, 1833.]

My dear Sir,

[Praises Allan Cunningham's *Maid of Elvar*, which he had received from him, and read aloud with pleasure; also Mr. Kenyon's *A Rhymed Plea for Tolerance* (1833).

. . . Hartley Coleridge has returned from Leeds to Grasmere, where upon the whole he seems to conduct himself creditably. We have only seen him once here, which is owing to his habitual want of resolution. He flies of necessity to pot-house wanderings, and is probably so far ashamed as to make him shy in coming to us, lest we should reproach him inwardly; for he knows very well that we should not tease him with censorial remarks upon a custom which has become a sort of second nature to him. He asks two copies of the *Selections* to be sent to him. . . .

DLXXXIX

William Wordsworth to Lady Beaumont

[1833.]

My dear Lady Beaumont,

You will excuse my employing Mrs. Wordsworth's pen to express my regret that the health, neither of Sir George nor yourself, is fitted to bear the climate of Coleorton during the winter season. Sincerely do I wish the air of Leamington may agree better with you. . . .

Believe me, dear Lady Beaumont, my wish is very strong to see your rising family, and especially if I could have that pleasure in my old haunts at Coleorton. Our thoughts in this house turn very much upon the impending fate of the Church, and also, as is natural, they are directed often to your father,¹ whose high office had never more anxious duties attached to it since the overthrow of the Church in Charles the First's time. . .

Were you ever told that my son is building a parsonage house upon a small living, to which he was lately presented by the Earl of Lonsdale? The situation is beautiful, commanding the windings of the Derwent both above and below the site of the house; the mountain Skiddaw terminating the view one way, at a distance of six miles, and the ruins of Cockermouth Castle appearing nearly in the centre of the same view. In consequence of some discouraging thoughts expressed by my son when he had entered upon this undertaking, I addressed to him the following sonnet, which you may perhaps read with some interest at the present crisis.

¹ Dr. William Howley, Archbishop of Canterbury. — Ed.

Pray accept Mrs. Wordsworth's affectionate remembrance (and in her own name, let her add her apologies for such an ill-penned note) to yourself and Sir George; and at the rectory our united regards, and believe me, my dear Lady Beaumont, to be, faithfully yours,

WM. WORDSWORTH.

[Then follows the sonnet beginning "Pastor and Patriot, at whose bidding rise."]

DXC

*William Wordsworth to Alexander Dyce*¹

My dear Sir,

[1833.]

The dedication² which you propose I shall esteem as an honour; nor do I conceive upon what ground, but an over-scrupulous modesty, I could object to it.

Be assured that Mr. Southey will not have the slightest unwillingness to your making any use you think proper of his *Memoir of Bampfylde*³: I shall not fail to mention the subject to him upon the first opportunity.

You propose to give specimens of the best sonnet-writers in our language.⁴ May I ask if by this be meant a selection of the sonnets that are best both as to kind and degree? A sonnet may be excellent in its kind, but that kind of very inferior interest to one of a higher order,

¹ This undated letter was written before that of Dec. 4. — Ed.

² Dyce had requested permission to dedicate his *Specimens of English Sonnets* to Wordsworth. — Ed.

³ John Codrington Bampfylde (1754-1796) wrote sixteen sonnets (1778) which Southey called "some of the most original in our language." — Ed.

⁴ He edited *Specimens of English Sonnets selected by A. Dyce*, in 1833. — Ed.

though not perhaps in every minute particular quite so well executed, and from the pen of a writer of inferior genius. It should seem that the best rule to follow would be, first, to pitch upon the sonnets which are best *both* in kind and perfectness of execution, and, next, those which — although of a humbler quality — are admirable for the finish and happiness of the execution; taking care to exclude all those which have not one or other of these recommendations, however striking they might be, as characteristic of the age in which the author lived, or some peculiarity of his manner. The tenth sonnet of Donne, beginning "Death, be not proud," is so eminently characteristic of his manner — and at the same time so weighty in thought, and vigorous in expression — that I would entreat you to insert it, though to modern taste it may be repulsive, quaint, and laboured. There are two sonnets of Russell,¹ which, in all probability, you may have noticed, "Could, then, the babes," and the one upon *Philoctetes*, the last six lines of which are first-rate. Southey's *Sonnet to Winter*² pleases me much; but, above all, among modern writers, that of Sir Egerton Brydges, upon *Echo and Silence*. Miss Williams's *Sonnet upon Twilight* is pleasing; that upon *Hope* of great merit.

Do you mean to have a short preface upon the construction of the sonnet? Though I have written so many, I have scarcely made up my own mind upon the subject. It should seem that the sonnet, like every other legitimate

¹ Thomas Russell's (1762–1788) *Sonnets and Miscellaneous Poems* were published in 1789. He was one of the first to revive the sonnet at the end of the eighteenth century. Wordsworth paid him the compliment of adopting his words in the last four lines of his own sonnet on *Iona*. See *Poetical Works*, Vol. VII, p. 380. — Ed.

² That beginning "A wrinkled, crabbed man they picture thee, old Winter." — Ed.

composition, ought to have a beginning, a middle, and an end; in other words, to consist of three parts, like the three propositions of a syllogism, if such an illustration may be used. But the frame of metre adopted by the Italians does not accord with this view; and, as adhered to by them, it seems to be — if not arbitrary — best fitted to a division of the sense into two parts, of eight and six lines each. Milton, however, has not submitted to this; in the better half of his sonnets the sense does not close with the rhyme at the eighth line, but overflows into the second portion of the metre. Now it has struck me that this is not done merely to gratify the ear by variety and freedom of sound, but also to aid in giving that pervading sense of intense unity in which the excellence of the sonnet has always seemed to me mainly to consist. Instead of looking at this composition as a piece of architecture, making a whole out of three parts, I have been much in the habit of preferring the image of an orbicular body, — a sphere or a dew-drop. All this will appear to you a little fanciful; and I am well aware that a sonnet will often be found excellent, where the beginning, the middle, and the end are distinctly marked, and also where it is distinctly separated into *two* parts, to which, as I before observed, the strict Italian model, as they write it, is favourable. Of this last construction of sonnet, Russell's upon *Philoctetes* is a fine specimen; the first eight lines give the hardship of the case, the six last the consolation, or the *per-contra*.

Ever faithfully,
Your much obliged friend and servant,

W. WORDSWORTH.

P.S. — In the case of the Cumberland poet, I overlooked a most pathetic circumstance. While he was lying under

the tree, and his friends were saving what they could from the flames, he desired them to bring out the box that contained his papers, if possible. A person went back for it, but the bottom dropped out, and the papers fell into the flames and were consumed. Immediately upon hearing this, the poor old man expired.

DXCI

William Wordsworth to Henry Taylor

[1833.]

My dear Mr. Taylor,

You and Mr. Lockhart have been very kind in taking so much trouble about the sonnets. I have altered them as well as I could to meet your wishes, and trust that you will find them improved, as I am sure they are where I have adopted your own words.

As to double rhymes, I quite agree with Mr. L. that in the case disapproved by him their effect is weak, and I believe will generally prove so in a couplet at the close of a sonnet. But having written so many, I do not scruple, but rather like to employ them occasionally, though I have done it much less in proportion than my great masters, especially Milton, who has two out of his eighteen with double rhymes. I am sure it will be a great advantage to these pieces to be presented to the public with your comments in the *Quarterly Review*, as you propose; but I must return to your suggestions. Where I have a large number of sonnets in series, I have not been unwilling to start sometimes with a logical connection of a "Yet" or a "But." Here, however, as the series is not long, I wished that each sonnet should stand independent of any such formal tie. . . .

1834

DXCII

Dorothy Wordsworth to Lady Beaumont

Monday, January 13th, [1834.]

My dear Lady Beaumont,

I will not tire you with explanations of the causes of my long silence and still less would I burthen you with excuse and apology; but in justice to Rydal Mount I must take upon myself the blame of the long silence kept up by the whole household, for it belongs to me alone; but so far from its being a proof that I was indifferent to the kindness expressed in your letter, it was the fulness of my gratitude which impelled me to assure my sister that I would myself write when she offered — as she has too often been obliged to do — to write for me. I did, however, then think (as I have double reasons now for thinking) that you would be no gainer by my choice; yet it was not an unpleasing fancy to me to believe that the pleasure of seeing my handwriting (as a proof of increased strength and better health) might more than compensate for your loss. You may believe that during the long time passed since you so kindly wrote to me there have been many days in which, as an invalid, I have not been able to use my pen; but latterly I have delayed writing in hopes I should be able to tell you that my niece was really soon to have the satisfaction of meeting with you at

Leamington. Nothing, however, could be fixed till after Miss Southey's marriage; an event which, as to time, remained all uncertain till the Archbishop, your venerable father, in his goodness, thought fit to present Mr. Warter, the intended husband, to a living which will enable them to live in all the comfort they could wish for.

The pair are to be married on Wednesday, and Dora is gone to Keswick to act as bridesmaid to this, the last of her unmarried friends of an age agreeing with her own. Of course Dora is happy in anticipation of her friend's happiness; but she so dreads the loss of her, and knows so well what a chasm will be left in her parents' house, that she would have gone off with a sad heart under any circumstances. At present the weight is twofold, because to spend a few "last days" with Edith Southey she was obliged abruptly to part from her eldest brother and her cousin Christopher, who had both come unlooked for to see us. The former is already gone, and the cousin must depart to-morrow, to prepare for a commencement of college duties as Greek Lecturer to Undergraduates (I add the last words to explain, not knowing exactly the title of his office). Mr. and Mrs. Merewether will be sorry to hear that we think Christopher Wordsworth, who has not the happiness of being personally acquainted with you, has drawn too largely upon his strength during a nine months' residence in Greece and long pedestrian travels in Switzerland. He is thin and pale, and his lively spirits are often oppressed by the scholar's malady, headaches. He is, however, so much better than he was some weeks ago that I hope nothing is wanted but a little more time for perfect restoration.

DXCIII

Dorothy Wordsworth to Lady Beaumont

Wednesday, January 15th.

I began my letter upon too large a scale, by which, my dear Lady Beaumont, you are no gainer; for in this case, as in most others, the longer the letter the more tiresome or dull. . . . I was obliged to put aside my paper and have been unable to go on from various causes until this day — the very day of the wedding. My brother and sister are preparing to go down the Rydal Mount hill to the turnpike road, where they will pace backward and forward to shake hands with, and give their blessing to, the bride and bridegroom on their way southward. Though the air is as mild as in the month of May, and the sun, after many days of gloom and darkness, shines sweetly upon them, and though there is every cause for thankfulness and hope, I fear neither sunshine nor genial breezes will dispel the sadness of Greta Hall; yet Mr. Southey himself, who will perhaps most constantly and most deeply feel the loss, will, I am sure, make such efforts to hide or to stifle his feelings that the saddest heart among them cannot but be cheered.

Mr. Warter is much beloved by the whole family into which he has entered, and *we* have formed a very favourable opinion of him. He and Miss Southey, and her sister and brother, spent a few days with us as soon as my brother's eyes would allow him to enjoy any company. For a very long time his wife and daughter were in constant watchful attendance, — either reading to or writing for him, — and I was beginning to hope that Dora might summon the resolution to go to Leamington after the marriage, but this she now declares she cannot do (she

should be so very wretched at a distance from her father) till his eyesight is more strengthened and secure; so we must now look forward to the time when the two may venture on their travels together, which I hope, whenever it is, may take them within reach of you. My sister cannot make a third, as, Miss Hutchinson not being at Rydal, she could not leave me.

I somewhat boldly did once hope that *I* might next spring be able to visit Cambridge and Coleorton, but I now feel that home is likely to be the place for me — and no hardship! for my prison (if we may so call it) is one of the prettiest and most cheerful in England, including what is to be seen from the windows; and I have no bodily oppression but from weakness, with occasional fits of uneasy pain that is not violent. I was grateful to you for all your communications — domestic and parish — for as long as I live I must retain affectionate and tender recollections of Whitwick and Coleorton, and shall be thankful if the day ever comes when I again set foot in the Hall and the two parsonage-houses. Need I add that it would delight me to see your little boys playing on the lawn? How distinctly do I recollect the nursery, and you, with your baby on your knee, and the delighted *grand-mother!* (I began to write and let it stand), looking on.

Great and melancholy the changes since that day, — and your own families have been severely tried, — yet happy are you in having such a comforter and such support at the head of them. I do not speak of public anxieties and cares, the subject is too weighty and perplexing for my poor mind; and I hope that the Archbishop's lessons are not so thrown away upon me as that I am not enabled to trust with calmness that God's good providence will order all things for the best. . . . It is time that I should

lay down the pen, for again I am getting into my old fault—seeking brevity, and never finding it. You must forgive me, for it is in confidence of your friendship that I go on. My brother promises to add a few words, therefore I conclude with begging you to present my respectful and affectionate regards to Sir George, with sincerest wishes that the next year may be a happy one; not like the last, a year of much sorrow and care. . . .

DXCIV

William Wordsworth to Samuel Rogers

Jan. 14, [1834.]

My dear Friend,

Yesterday I received your most valuable present of three copies of your beautiful book,¹ which I assure you will be nowhere more prized than in this house. My sister was affected even to the shedding of tears by this token of your remembrance. When a person has been shut up for upwards of twelve months in a sick room it is a touching thing to receive proofs from time to time of not being forgotten. Dora is at Keswick to attend as bridesmaid on Miss Southey, who loses her family name to-morrow. Your book has been forwarded, and we hope it will be received at Greta Hall to-day.

Of the execution of the plates, as compared with the former volume, and the merit of the designs we have not yet had time to judge; but I cannot forbear adding that as several of the poems are among my oldest and dearest acquaintances in the literature of our day, such an elegant

¹ Rogers' *Poems*.—Ed.

edition of them, with their illustrations, must to me be peculiarly acceptable. . . .

I remain, my dear Rogers,

Faithfully yours,

WM. WORDSWORTH.

We were grieved to notice the death of the veteran Sotheby. Not less than fourteen of our relatives, friends, or valued acquaintances have been removed by death within the last three or four months.

DXCV

William Wordsworth to Edward Moxon

January 14th, 1834.

My dear Sir,

The valuable parcel is arrived. We are charmed with the design and execution of the illustrations and with the taste of the whole work,¹ which with its companion, the *Italy*, will shine as brother stars — though not twin-born — in the hemisphere of literature for many centuries. I have read also some part of Mr. Milner's book, the dedication of which is, for its length, perhaps one of the most admirable specimens of that class of composition to be found in the whole compass of English literature. Of the poems also I can say, though I have but yet read a few of them, that they added another to the proofs that much poetical genius is stirring among the youth of this country. In the work of Allan Cunningham to which you refer, he has trifled with his own good name in authorship. He is a man of distinguished talents; but as a poet

¹ Rogers' *Poems*. — Ed.

and a biographer he ought to be more careful than he has been in the work you criticise, were it only for considerations of pecuniary gain. I do not know who would take the liberty to tell him this, but I am sure it would be a friendly act. . . .

Charles Lamb's verses¹ are always delightful, like everything he writes, for he both feels and thinks. Will he excuse me for observing that the couplet,

With grateful feelings like a signet signed
By a strong hand seemed burnt into her mind,

appears to me incorrect to experience; as we do not burn by a seal, but by a branding iron.

It grieved us all to the heart to hear of dear Miss Lamb's illness. Miss Southey is to be married to-morrow. Our daughter is with her.

DXCVI

William Wordsworth to Allan Cunningham

[Postmark, January 17, 1834.]

My dear Sir,

. . . Mr. Moxon, from whom I heard yesterday, tells me that you were gratified by my commendation of your *Maid of Elvar*. . . . The little audience of my family were as much pleased as myself; and indeed I can sincerely say that the poem is full of spirit and poetic movement. We have also read with pleasure the volume of your *Lives of the Painters*, containing that of my lamented friend, Sir George Beaumont. I wish I had seen the MS. before the book was printed, as I could have corrected some errors in matter of fact, and supplied some

¹ They were those *To a Friend, on his Marriage*. — Ed.

deficiencies. If this life should be reprinted shortly, I shall with pleasure do this for you. I have also a copy of verses inspired by his memory, which, if not too long — I think they amount to between fifty and sixty lines — I would place at your disposal for the same purpose.

I was gratified by learning from his handsome edition of Drummond, which your son sent me, that he had taken a turn for letters. . . .

I remain, my dear sir,

Faithfully your obliged friend,

WM. WORDSWORTH.

DXCVII

Edward Quillinan to Sir Egerton Brydges

BOULOGNE-SUR-MER, No. 9 SUR LE RAMPART,
Sunday, February 23, 1834.

Dear Sir Egerton,

. . . My publisher wrote to me proposing to publish the second section of my poem, just as I was on the point of asking him whether he would take to it. . . . Thank God, I have done with it, "For much I loathed the ditty sweet to write." I do not myself by any means partake of the bookseller's anticipations of its success, for he tells me at the same time that not a volume of verse but the *Selections from Wordsworth* and Rogers' embellished *Italy* has paid its expenses since the death of Byron. Wordsworth has a volume of unprinted poetry ready, but reserves it, he says, "for better times." Yet his old works, though expensive, have a regular and steadily increasing sale. . . . When I was at Cambridge a few weeks ago I was delighted to find in Milton's MS.

of *Arcades*, *Comus*, and some of the sonnets evidence that you are wrong in supposing that Milton composed with flowing facility. I suppose you have seen those glorious MSS. If so, can you have forgotten the scratches, and patches, and erasures, and improvements on the original thought? My cicerone, Christopher Wordsworth, who is a Fellow of Trinity, told me he had seen you at Geneva at Mr. Sismondi's. Do you remember him? He is an able man, and accurately learned; so are both his brothers, John and Charles, which is very remarkable. Their father, the Master of Trinity, though I daresay he has the learning, has by no means the talents of any one of his sons. Dining in hall every day while I was in Cambridge I was much amused with the scene, and also interested by the sight of some few noticeable persons. But in general it is a raw concern: not the dinners, though. Give me to dine at the Fellows' tables for classical cookery! And then their audit-ale! Your Falernian was nothing to it. I astonished some grave doctors and some unfledged patricians (among them two sons of Lord Grey, who seemed good-natured young men) by protesting that I had come to Cambridge for the first time in my life, and had come all the way from Picardy too, wholly and solely to drink audit-ale. I met at Cambridge, to my surprise, James Todd, whilom your pale visitant. He is studying divinity, resigning the law for the church. I was diverted to find that he is pointed out at Cambridge as the man who went *twice* to Russia *for three days*. . . . I am better off for French literature, which has taken a strong spring latterly. Among their poets Victor Hugo for wild daring, Lamartine for elegance, and Béranger for *esprit*, are most to my taste. But there are many others of great merit. One of the

most interesting books I have lately read (I always read myself to sleep) is not new, — Lacretelle's *History of the Wars of the League*.¹ . . .

Believe me, dear Sir Egerton,

Yours faithfully,

E. QUILLINAN.

DXCVIII

William Wordsworth to John Gardner

March 12, [probably 1834.]

. . . My mother died of pulmonary consumption at the age of twenty-seven. She left five children, one of whom was drowned at sea. Three are still alive, the youngest in his sixtieth year. . . .

[The age of his mother (Anne Cookson) at her death, as given by Wordsworth in this letter to John Gardner, is incorrect. She was born at Penrith in January, 1747, married at the age of nineteen in February, 1766, and died in March, 1778, being then thirty-one years of age, and predeceasing her husband by nearly six years. In the *Autobiographical Memoranda*, dictated by the poet at Rydal Mount in November, 1847, he wrote, "My mother, in the year 1778, died of a decline, brought on by a cold in consequence of being put at a friend's house in London into what used to be called a 'best bedroom.' My father never recovered his usual cheerfulness of mind after this loss, and died when I was in my fourteenth year, a schoolboy just returned from Hawkshead."

The youngest child was Christopher, born 1774, died 1846. Wordsworth had a good deal of correspondence

¹ Jean Charles Dominique de Lacretelle (1766-1855) wrote *Histoire de France pendant le XVIII^e Siècle*. — Ed.

at this time with Mr. Gardner about his nephew, John Wordsworth (son of his elder brother, Richard, solicitor in London), who was in delicate health. Richard Wordsworth died at the age of forty-eight, in the year 1816, a year after his son John's birth. — Ed.]

DXCIX

William Wordsworth to Mrs. Hemans

RYDAL MOUNT, April, 1834.

My dear Mrs. Hemans,

. . . You have submitted what you intended as a dedication of your poems to me. I need scarcely say that, as a private letter, such expressions from such a quarter could not have been received by me but with pleasure of no ordinary kind, unchecked by any consideration but the fear that my writings were overrated by you, and my character thought better of than it deserved. But I must say that a public testimony, in so high a strain of admiration, is what I cannot but shrink from: be this modesty true or false, it is in me; you must bear with it, and make allowance for it. And, therefore, as you have submitted the whole to my judgment, I am emboldened to express a wish that you would, instead of this dedication, in which your warm and kind heart has overpowered you, simply inscribe them to me, with such expression of respect or gratitude as would come within the limits of the rule which, after what has been said above, will naturally suggest itself. Of course, if the sheet has been struck off, I must hope that my shoulders may become a little more Atlantean than I now feel them to be.

My sister is not quite so well. She, Mrs. Wordsworth, and Dora all unite with me in best wishes and kindest remembrances to yourself and yours; and

Believe me to remain, dear Mrs. Hemans,

Faithfully yours,

WM. WORDSWORTH.

DC

William Wordsworth to Henry Crabb Robinson

RYDAL MOUNT, April 3d, [1834.]

My dear Friend,

. . . During a stay of upwards of a fortnight with my son in Moresby—from which Mrs. Wordsworth and I have just returned—I had much enjoyment in seeing him and his wife so happy, and in making a more intimate acquaintance with my granddaughter. She has just entered the dramatic age, and is within a day or two of walking; as lively creature as ever was seen, which strikes one the more in contrast with the manners of her parents, and her nurse; all still and quiet as trees, whose branches may have been light and flexible, but are now less so than one of my disposition could wish. One calm and beautiful day John and I took a long and most delightful walk, following, from Whitehaven—along the top of the cliffs—the indentings of the coast as far as the monastery of St. Bees. Our last summer's acquaintance, the Isle of Man, was full in sight, so were the Scotch hills; and when we came to a point of the headlands which showed the bay of St. Bees, with the whole line of the Cumberland coast, to its extreme southern

point, — with Black Comb and Scawfell presiding over the view, — the effect was magnificent. . . .

You are quite at liberty to send my sonnets to Landor, if you think it worth while; but his antipathies are strong, and I know he has a particular dislike to the *sonnet*. . . .

In much that you say about the dissenters I concur, but not in your opinion “that, the sooner any purposed change takes place the better chance there is that that change may have a conservative character.” Surely this maxim must be qualified by a consideration of what is to be changed, and to what extent change is desirable. For myself I would oppose tooth and nail the petition from Cambridge in behalf of the dissenters, because it is hypocritical and, if granted, will inevitably lead to a demand for degrees, which will give votes, open to them the emoluments and offices of the University and make them a part of the governing body, an event which for innumerable reasons — and not the least for its tendency to overthrow the Established Church — I earnestly deprecate. There is a fallacy in one of your suppositions, — you think Dissenters, if admitted upon equal terms with Churchmen, would go over to the Church in numbers. Now it is the very exclusion which induces them to go over. Ann Barbould, an acute observer, tells us younger ones that she never knew a family of dissenters who kept a carriage through eight generations, and continued such. Why was this? Because having got so high in the world’s ladder they wished to be higher. And the ready way was to step over their consciences, if they had any religious scruples left. . . .

Ever affectionately yours,

WM. WORDSWORTH.

DCI

*Dorothy Wordsworth to Mrs. Pollard*¹

April 12, [1834.]

. . . You will forgive me, for a solitary bed-chamber does not furnish a variety of incidents. Solitary I call it, but my friends are very kind, and sit with me as much and as often as leisure will allow, except when the fear of fatiguing me keeps them away. Sometimes of late I have chid myself for impatience, for the sun shines so bright and the birds sing so sweetly that I have an almost painful longing to go out of doors, and am half tempted to break my bonds and sally forth into the garden; but I must be content to wait till the wind changes its quarters, and before that happens rain will surely come (which may still keep me confined), for damp is almost as dangerous a foe as the east wind. . . . Strange to say it, this poor scrawl has been the work of four days. Yesterday with a thankful heart I revisited the garden and green terrace in my little carriage. I cannot express the joy I felt, and though much fatigued I did not suffer in any other way. No one but an invalid can imagine the pleasure (after long confinement) of being surrounded again by sunshine and fresh air, budding trees, flowers and birds. I looked about for young lambs, but discovered not one. Do not think, however, that my confinement has been irksome to me: quite the contrary; for within this little square I have a collection of treasures, and on the outside of my window I have had a garden of ever-blooming flowers, and you know

¹ This letter is addressed to Harrowgate. Mrs. Pollard was a sister-in-law of Mrs. Marshall *née* Jane Pollard. — Ed.

how beautiful a prospect. Never have my flower pots been seen unadorned, in addition to the bright berries of winter holly, etc. I have plenty of good old books and most of the news are supplied by friends or neighbors. . . . I never want anything that I can desire or wish for.

DCII

William Wordsworth to Sir William M. Gomm

RYDAL MOUNT, April 16, 1834.

My dear Sir,

Your verses, for which I sincerely thank you, are an additional proof of the truth which forced from me, many years ago, the exclamation,

Oh! many are the poets that are sown
By Nature.¹

The rest of that paragraph also has some bearing upon your position in the poetical world. The thoughts and images through both the poems, and the feelings also, are eminently such as become their several subjects; but it would be insincerity were I to omit adding that there is here and there a want of that skill in *workmanship*, which I believe nothing but continued practice in the art can bestow. I have used the word *art*, from a conviction, which I am called upon almost daily to express, that poetry is infinitely more of an art than the world is disposed to believe. Nor is this any dishonour to it; both for the reason that the poetic faculty is not rarely bestowed, and for this cause, also, that men would not be disposed

¹ *The Excursion*, Book I, l. 77. — Ed.

to ascribe so much to inspiration, if they did not feel how near and dear to them poetry is.

With sincere regards and best wishes to yourself and Lady Gomm,

Believe me to be very sincerely yours,

W. WORDSWORTH.

DCIII

William Wordsworth to Henry Taylor

TRINITY LODGE, CAMBRIDGE, April 25, 1834.

My dear Sir,

Thus far on my way to the north, being suddenly called out of town. On Sunday I visited Charles Lamb, and did not return till four o'clock on Monday afternoon.

Of the dissolution, or desolation, of Parliament (as the gyps here call it) I shall say nothing. You know what I must think of it, and our poor Jack Tar of a king. God have mercy upon him and us all. . . .

WM. WORDSWORTH.

DCIV

*William Wordsworth to Christopher Wordsworth*¹

May 15, 1834.

My dear C——,

You will wonder what is become of us, and I am afraid you will think me very unworthy the trouble you took in writing to us and sending your pamphlet. A thousand

¹ His nephew, son of the Master of Trinity. — Ed.

little things have occurred to prevent my calling upon Mrs. Wordsworth, who is ever ready to write for me, in respect to the question that you have so ably handled. Since the night when the Reform Bill was first introduced, I have been convinced that the institutions of the country cannot be preserved. . . . It is a mere question of time. A great majority of the present Parliament, I believe, are in the main favourable to the preservation of the Church, but among these many are ignorant how that is to be done. Add to the portion of those who with good intentions are in the dark, the number who will be driven or tempted to vote against their consciences by the clamour of their sectarian and infidel constituents under the Reform Bill, and you will have a daily augmenting power even in this Parliament, which will be more and more hostile to the Church every week and every day. You will see from the course which my letter thus far has taken that I regard the prayer of the petitioners to whom you are opposed as formidable still more from the effect which, if granted, it will ultimately have upon the Church, and through that medium upon the Monarchy and upon social order, than for its immediate tendency to introduce discord in the Universities, and all those deplorable consequences which you have so feelingly painted as preparatory to their destruction.

I am not yet able to use my eyes for reading or writing, but your pamphlet has been twice read to me. . . .

God bless you. . . .

Affectionately yours,

WM. WORDSWORTH.

DCV

William Wordsworth to Henry Taylor

RYDAL MOUNT, June 10th, [1834?]

My dear Sir,

I have just received your two volumes,¹ and send my thanks before I have read them; not from the fear that I might not be able to report favourably of their impression upon my mind, but from apprehension that some time may elapse before the state of my eyes will allow me to read them. . . .

On my table are no less than six books, lately received from the kindness of different authors, that I have not acknowledged, having deferred doing so from a hope that I might without injury peruse them; and I have really been so harassed in mind by this procrastination that I am determined your case shall not be added to them. When we meet again we will talk over your dramatic labours. . . .

DCVI

*William Wordsworth to Allan Cunningham*RYDAL MOUNT, June 14th, [1834.²]

My dear Sir,

I have just heard from my son, who now lives at Workington, that the bust you kindly forwarded to him has been received; and, as I learned some little time

¹ It is difficult to know what volumes they were. *Philip van Artevelde* was published in 1834, *The Statesman* in 1836, and *Edwin the Fair* in 1842. — Ed.

² There is no clew in the MS. to the year in which this letter was written, but the reference to the Western Highland visit in 1833 fixes it as 1834. — Ed.

ago, those intended for my two nephews at Cambridge have also reached their destination. I now write with pleasure to thank you for your obliging attention to my request, and have to beg that you will let me know the amount of my debt to you, so that I may give directions for its being discharged.

It is a long time since I was in London, nor can I foresee when I am likely to be there again; which I regret principally on account of my losing, in consequence, an opportunity of keeping up my acquaintance with works of art — ancient and modern — and of seeing my friends, who reside there, without occasionally coming into this country. One of the last times, if not the last, I had the pleasure of seeing you was at dinner at Sir Robert Inglis's. Mr. Sotheby was of the party. He was an old man, and is no more. Scarcely a month passes without taking away some of my literary friends. Mr. Chantrey and yourself, I hope, continue to enjoy good health. Pray make my kind regards to him, and to Mrs. Chantrey, and also to Mrs. Cunningham, not forgetting to present my remembrances to your son, who I am glad to see — from his elegant and judicious selection from Drummond (which he kindly sent me) — has a turn for literature.

Last summer I visited Staffa, Iona, and part of the Western Highlands, and returned through your town of Dumfries, having for the first time passed through Burns's country, both in Renfrewshire and Ayrshire (if I am correct). It gave me much pleasure to see Kilmarnock, Mauchlin, Mossgeil Farm, the Ayre (which we crossed where he winds his way most romantically through rocks and woods) and to have a sight of Irwin and Lugar, which naebody sung till he named them in immortal verse.

The banks of the Nith I *had* seen before, and was glad to renew my acquaintance with them, for Burns's sake; and, let me add without flattery, for yours. By the bye, what a sorry piece of sculpture is Burns's monument in Dumfries churchyard, — monstrous in conception and clumsy in execution. It is a disgrace to the memory of the poet. In my native county of Cumberland I saw a piece of art which made ample amends. It is at Wetheral church, upon the banks of the Eden, a monument to the memory of the first Mrs. Howard of Corby. You no doubt have either seen or heard of it. I first saw it many years ago in the studio of Nollekens, in London. How a man of such a physiognomy and figure could execute a work with so much feeling and grace I am at a loss to conceive! Believe me, with kind regards from my wife and all my family who know you,

Very faithfully, your obliged friend,

WM. WORDSWORTH.

DCVII

William Wordsworth to Henry Crabb Robinson

RYDAL MOUNT, June 16, [1834.]

My dear Friend, . . .

Your intended expedition to the United States was news to us, and it was not altogether good news. We are rather too old to think without some pain of our friends being separated so far from us. You yourself are no longer young, and casualties as we advance are not easily recovered from. Indeed, the more I look into this scheme the less I relish it. There are not many things in America which can be called sights. Niagara, it is

true, is a first-rate one, but not worth crossing the Atlantic for, and as to American manners and society, we have these in so many books that it seems as well to be content with what may be collected from them, while at ease upon one's own sofa, or under the shade of an English oak in this sweet summer weather. At all events, whether you go or not, come to us; which you may do with little cost of time or trouble, as you will no doubt embark at Liverpool, if you do not give up your scheme.

Poole is quite welcome to my sonnets; and if you choose to add the Lowther Church and State one, you have my free consent. . . .

Thanks for all that you say about the Dissenters. An Appeal to the English Dissenters — in a letter to William Howitt by a lay Dissenter (London, Longmans & Co.) — has been sent me by the author. It is well worth your reading. The style is somewhat verbose; but the philosophy is sound, and the spirit truly Christian. If you like it, as I am confident you will, pray recommend it among your friends. We are always glad to hear of the Lambs. Pray give our love to them, and remember me to Moxon and his wife, if you ever look in upon them.

This is a season of resignations, and Thursday I go to Kendal to put off my dignity of chapel warden.

Ever sincerely and affectionately yours,

With best wishes for all,

WM. WORDSWORTH.

DCVIII

William Wordsworth to Edward Moxon

July 17th, 1834.

My dear Sir,

Reluctant as I am, I have at last given way, and am about to send a volume of poems to the press. Wishing to connect your name with mine by publication, I mentioned to Longman that it would be a pleasure to me to offer the publication to you, especially as we had some conversation together on the subject; but I left it to their decision, as I found myself bound to do from my long connection with them, and from their answer I transcribe.

"It would be very detrimental to the sale of your books to have part of them published by another house. . . . We think you have done right to abandon illustrations. To have them executed as those in Rogers's works would be so very expensive that we should doubt their ever answering."

[He then adds that the sale of the last edition has been good.]

DCIX

Dora Wordsworth to Henry Crabb Robinson

July 24, 1834.

My dear Mr. Robinson,

I can no longer allow your kind and beautiful present to remain unacknowledged. My thanks would have been sent ere this had I not been prevented troubling you with a letter, from a hope that my father or aunt might be writing to you; in which case my thanks might have

been conveyed to you in a manner more agreeable to yourself and more satisfactory to me, for I feel I cannot half express the pleasure which this delightful gift of yours has afforded me. My father and I look over the prints again and again till we really fancy ourselves floating on that grand river, and thank you, both with our hearts and our tongues, for putting us in the way of making that pleasant trip so easily. . . .

My father has at last yielded to our oft-repeated entreaties, and is about to send his short MS. poems to press, which when collected we expect will, with a little stuffing, make a volume about the size of those of the last edition which Mr. Longman tells us has sold better than any former one. The title of the new volume is to be *Yarrow Revisited, with Other Poems*, so you will soon have all your favourite new Scotch sonnets without the trouble of transcribing. . . .

The Arnolds are all come to Fox How, and are delighted with their Westmorland home, as well they may; the doctor gave us a sermon yesterday which I dare say would have been more to your taste than it was to mine, good as it was in parts, and all of it tersely and beautifully expressed. . . .

With very affectionate remembrances from all in this house, believe me ever, my dear Mr. Robinson,

Yours very sincerely and much obliged,

DORA WORDSWORTH.

I think I will try to persuade aunt to add a few lines as a reward for your patience in wading through the above, but perhaps I ought not to tell her of my impertinence in writing to you at all.

D. W.

My dear Friend,

I comply, not for the reason assigned by Dora, for I can say nothing as well as she has said her say, but because I want to assure you of my affectionate regards and, I may say, daily remembrances. It would be a great delight to me if you would come again and drag me on the green terrace—for alas! my legs are but of little use except in helping me to steer an enfeebled body from one part of the room to the other. The longest walk I have attempted has been once round the gravel front of the house. . . .

Are not you glad about the poems? God bless you!

Ever your affectionate,

D. W., SR.

DCX

William Wordsworth to Henry Nelson Coleridge

July 29, 1834.

My dear Sir,

Though the account which Miss Hutchinson had given of the state of our friend's¹ health had prepared us for the sad tidings of your letter, the announcement of his dissolution was not the less a great shock to myself and all this family. We are much obliged to you for entering so far into the particulars of our ever-to-be-lamented friend's decease, and we sincerely congratulate you and his dear daughter upon the calmness of mind, and the firm faith in his Redeemer, which supported him through his painful bodily and mental trials, and which we hope and trust have enrolled his spirit among those of the blessed.

Your letter was received on Sunday morning, and would have been answered by return of post, but I wished to see poor Hartley first, thinking it would be comfortable to

¹ S. T. Coleridge. — Ed.

yourself and his sister to learn from a third person how he appeared to bear his loss. Mrs. Wordsworth called on him yesterday morning; he promised to go over to Rydal, but did not appear till after post-time. He was calm, but much dejected; expressed strongly his regret that he had not seen his father before his departure from this world, and also seemed to lament that he had been so little with him during the course of their lives. . . .

I cannot give way to the expression of my feelings upon this mournful occasion. I have not strength of mind to do so. The last year has thinned off so many of my friends, young and old, and brought with it so much anxiety, private and public, that it would be no kindness to you were I to yield to the solemn and sad thoughts and remembrances which press upon me. It is nearly forty years since I first became acquainted with him whom we have just lost; and though with the exception of six weeks when we were on the Continent together, along with my daughter, I have seen little of him for the last twenty years, his mind has been habitually present with me, with an accompanying feeling that he was still in the flesh. That frail tie is broken, and I, and most of those who are nearest and dearest to me, must prepare and endeavour to follow him. Give my affectionate love to Sara, and remember me tenderly to Mrs. Coleridge; in these requests Mrs. Wordsworth, my poor sister, Miss Hutchinson, and Dora unite, and also in very kind regards to yourself; and believe me, my dear sir,

Gratefully yours,

W. WORDSWORTH.

Pray remember us kindly to Mr. and Mrs. Gillman when you see them.

DCXI

William Wordsworth to Edward Moxon

August 25th, 1834.

. . . I am of your opinion that the sale of my works would be promoted by being published monthly as you propose, and if I live to see another edition it shall be done. . . .

[Dorothy Wordsworth writes to Moxon — October 2d, 1834 — saying that in the absence of her brother on a visit to his son at Workington, she introduces Mr. Godwin, a neighbour, who wished his wife's poems published. Dorothy Wordsworth says her brother thinks highly of Mr. Godwin's power, that she thinks highly of the poems, and commends the Godwins as neighbours and friends.]

DCXII

William Wordsworth to Mrs. Hemans

RYDAL MOUNT, Sept., 1834.

My dear Mrs. Hemans,

I avail myself gladly of the opportunity of Mr. Graves's return to acknowledge the honour you have done me in prefixing my name to your volume of beautiful poems, and to thank you for the copy you have sent me with your own autograph. Where there is so much to admire, it is difficult to select; and therefore I shall content myself with naming only two or three pieces. And, first, let me particularise the piece that stands second in the volume, *Flowers and Music in a Room of Sickness*.¹ This

¹ The volume "Scenes and Hymns of Life" (1834), was dedicated to Wordsworth. — Ed.

was especially touching to me, on my poor sister's account, who has long been an invalid, confined almost to her chamber. The feelings are sweetly touched throughout this poem, and the imagery very beautiful; above all, in the passage where you describe the colour of the petals of the wild rose. This morning I have read the stanzas upon *Elysium*¹ with great pleasure. You have admirably expanded the thought of Chateaubriand. If we had not been disappointed in our expected pleasure of seeing you here, I should have been tempted to speak of many other passages and poems with which I have been delighted.

Your health, I hope, is by this time re-established. Your son Charles looks uncommonly well, and we have had the pleasure of seeing him and his friends several times; but as you are aware, we are much engaged with visitors at this season of the year, so as not always to be able to follow our inclinations as to whom we would wish to see. I cannot conclude without thanking you for your sonnet upon a place so dear to me as Grasmere;² it is worthy of the subject. With kindest remembrances, in which unite Mrs. Wordsworth, my sister, and Dora,

I remain, dear Mrs. Hemans,

Your much obliged friend,

WM. WORDSWORTH.

¹ In her "Miscellaneous Poems." — Ed.

² Its title is *A Remembrance of Grasmere* and is included in her "Records of the Spring of 1834." — Ed.

DCXIII

Dorothy Wordsworth to Mrs. Clarkson

Begun Monday, 18th October, [1834?]

My dear Friend,

. . . If autumnal cold and dampness had not come on, I think I should now be able to walk far enough to have a look at the prospect from the old terrace, but cold is my horror, so I must not execute this large scheme till we have spring breezes and sunshine. Whenever the weather allows it I continue to go out daily either in the family phaeton, which is dragged by one of the steadiest and best of horses, guided by a very skilful driver (my dear niece), or the man-servant takes me round and round the garden and upon the lower new-made green terrace in a Bath chair. . . .

DCXIV

William Wordsworth, Mary Wordsworth, and Dorothy Wordsworth to Henry Crabb Robinson

November 21st, [1834.]

My dear Friend, . . .

My daughter is becoming a great student, particularly of novels! At present she is better engaged reading La Borde's account of Spain, and I am in hopes that by and bye she will attack Herodotus and Thucydides. Miss Hutchinson has been seven weeks with Mr. Southey's family. The accounts of Mr. Southey, now at York in the Retreat, in consequence of depression of spirits and alienation of mind, are upon the whole rather encouraging. . . .

The publication of my little volume has been retarded by the printing being put into most careless hands, acting under the most inattentive minds, with which I was ever concerned. The delay is lucky, as neither *Othello*, *Macbeth*, nor *Paradise Lost*, if now first produced, would be attended to.

The deposition of the Melbourne ministry was by me received rather with fear than pleasure. You have known from the first my opinion of the Reform Bill. To speak of it in the mildest terms, it was an unwise measure, carried by unworthy means. The composition of the present House of Commons shows what will ever be the case where Democracy is predominant — that the people prefer their flatterers to their friends; and they will go on showing more or less of that preference, till the government by King, Lords, and Commons, and the ancient Constitution of England in Church and State are destroyed. Not being able to escape from this conviction, I ought not to have used the word “fear” as above, for my mind is entirely made up to the worst. It is simply, in my estimation, a question of time. So no more about it, but let us be as cheerful as we can; and each act, guided by the best lights he can procure. . . .

Your account of Germany, for which I thank you, is satisfactory. Be assured of the kind regards of us all, and believe me to be, my dear friend,

Ever faithfully yours,

WM. WORDSWORTH.

RYDAL MOUNT, November 21st.

Cannot you, my dear sir, come down and pass your Christmas with us? You have never seen, nor can you guess, how beautiful our mountains are in the winter;

and how much you would cheer our fireside and Dora, not to speak of Miss Wordsworth, I will not say. Pray come and let us hear of your adventures.

Affectionately yours,

M. W.

Dear Mr. Robinson,

Do come to us at Christmas. I cannot say how glad I should be to see you. Alas! poor Mary and Charles Lamb!

Ever your affectionate friend,

D. WORDSWORTH.

DCXV

William Wordsworth to Sir George Beaumont

RYDAL MOUNT, Nov. 27th, 1834.

Dear Sir George,

The letter with which I now trouble you will not seem to require an apology, when I have mentioned the circumstance which occasions it.

In the private sitting-room of my deceased friend, Lady Beaumont, a small picture painted by Sir George, which he presented to me, was hung, and which at Lady Beaumont's request I gave up to her for her lifetime. The subject is a scene in Switzerland, and on the back of it will be found a memorandum in Lady Beaumont's handwriting, certifying (if I am not mistaken) to whom it belongs. Sir George in his kindness intended to paint for me a companion to this little piece, — as characteristic of Italy as this is of Switzerland, — but the intention was not fulfilled. Having mentioned these particulars, I need scarcely add that I should be obliged by your forwarding

this memorial of Sir George's friendship for me to Rydal at your convenience.

My sister is much better in health, though still an invalid. She and Mrs. Wordsworth unite with me in kind remembrances to yourself and Lady Beaumont, and believe me, dear Sir George,

Faithfully yours,

WM. WORDSWORTH.

DCXVI

Dora Wordsworth to Edward Quillinan

RYDAL, Xmas, 1834.

Dear Mr. Quillinan,

. . . I need not say how *earnestly* I wish you may look favourably upon my father's and mother's proposal for having Rotha with us for two or three months while Mima is at Weymouth and you perhaps in Portugal; but I dare not trust myself to think, much less to write, upon this subject. . . .

Ever yours, faithfully and affectionately,

DORA WORDSWORTH.

P.S. — I may teach Rotha to ride and to drive, and she may teach me to walk, and to talk (French); and I am sure we shall teach each other to be very happy. D. W.

1835

DCXVII

*William Wordsworth to Thomas Noon Talfourd*¹

January 1, 1835.

. . . Your letter brought a great shock to us all. I had not heard from yourself when you were here that any thing was threatening Lamb's health, and Miss Hutchinson who saw him later in the spring reported that he was looking wonderfully well and appeared in excellent spirits. He has followed poor Coleridge within six months. It seems to us upon reflection that his sister will bear the loss of him better than he could have borne that of her; and we are bound to believe so, as it has pleased God to take him first. There seems to be, with respect to his dear sister, from your account, enough to provide her with all comforts which her melancholy situation will admit of. Should it however not be so, there can be no doubt that Lamb's surviving friends will be too happy to contribute whatever may be desired. I need scarcely have mentioned this, because Lamb, though exceedingly generous, and charitable above measure, was also prudent and thoughtful. . . .

¹ In reply to the letter in which Talfourd had told him of the death of Charles Lamb. — Ed.

DCXVIII

William Wordsworth to Henry Taylor

RYDAL MOUNT, January 6, [1835.]

My dear Sir,

Thank you for the king's speech, which I have not yet read, having been employed all the morning in writing letters. Political knowledge is at a low ebb in the village of Rydal, nor will you think much of its political sagacity when I tell you that a leading man among our humbler yeomanry refused to sign the laity's declaration of attachment to the Church "because the list of signatures would be sent up to London there to be kept in a safe place till the Dissenters and Papists had got the uppermost, which they would soon do; and then, with the list in their hands, they would come and cut off the heads of all who had signed it"! And, would you believe it, this person, in the concerns of daily life, is one of the shrewdest of our little yeomen!

His caution reminds me of the prospective prudence of a gentleman of large property who resided in our neighbourhood some years, and would never attend the parish church lest he should become the unwilling eye-witness of some misconduct of the clergyman, and be consequently called upon to give evidence against him in some of the courts! The clergyman was in fact a graceless! and the discretion came from Scotland. What other country could have given birth to it?

*The Doctor*¹ seems to take well — I am heartily glad of it.

¹ Southey's book. — Ed.

One of the enclosed letters I have not directed. It is merely an acknowledgement for a couple of volumes received yesterday, and the like for Mr. Southey, which ought to have come to hand some months ago. I cannot defer my thanks till I have an opportunity of getting a frank here. Will you therefore *at your convenience* procure one for me, and forward the note? I shall not trouble you in this way again.

We had pleasant accounts from Keswick yesterday — including good tidings of the bride and bridegroom, who are at present at their father's house in Shropshire.¹ My sister you will be glad to hear has been in a comfortable state, since we had the pleasure of seeing you here. My eyes are well, and would be useful to me for reading and writing if I could keep my mind quiet; but the worst part of my case is that mental labour, *if persisted in*, is always injurious to them; and, unfortunately for me, *if I am not possessed by any employment*, I cannot work at all.

I hope that Mrs. Taylor, as also our good friend Miss Fenwick, have enjoyed health throughout the late boisterous and rainy, though mild, season.

With the united good wishes of this household, believe me to be, my dear sir,

Very sincerely yours,

WM. WORDSWORTH.

¹ Edith May Southey was married to J. W. Warter on Jan. 15, 1834. — Ed.

DCXIX

William Wordsworth to Edward Moxon

LOWTHER CASTLE, January, 1835.

. . . The Radicals and foolish Whigs are driving the nation rapidly to the point, that soon, alas! it is likely to be found that power will pass from the audacious and wicked to the more audacious and wicked, and so to the still more and more, till military despotism comes in as a quietus. And then, after a time, the struggle for liberty will re-commence; and you, young as you are, should your life be prolonged to the seventy years of the psalmist, will not live to see her cause crowned with success. . . .

DCXX

William Wordsworth to Francis Wrangham

RYDAL MOUNT, February 2d, [1835.]

My dear Wrangham,

Sincere thanks are due from me for the attention you paid to Mrs. Wordsworth's letter, written during my absence. You know the favourable opinion I entertain of Mr. Graves, and I was under a promise to let him know if any vacancy occurred in this neighbourhood, and to do all I could, without infringing upon prior or stronger claims, to promote the attainment of his wishes. Mrs. Wordsworth judiciously and properly stated in her letter that it was not her desire, and she trusted it was no one's else, to interfere with any claims which in the judgment of the Bishop the sons of our late friend might

have. Had she not made this proviso, I should have regretted she mixed at all in a business of so delicate a nature; but I will not conceal from you that out of these well-intended and right endeavours of hers has arisen much uneasiness to herself — from the circumstance that Mr. Thomas Fleming, who was his father's curate at Bootle, is now likely to be without employment. Of him *personally* we have but slight knowledge, but it redounds much to his honour that he had set aside, before his father's death, the proceeds of his fellowship to maintain a younger brother at college, his father not being able to do it; he himself living upon his stipend as his father's curate. This fact was mentioned some little time ago to Mrs. Wordsworth by a friend and benefactress of the family. It grieves me to add, that the eldest son, our minister, — a most excellent person and a zealous pastor, — has taken offense at what we have done in this business, the whole particulars of which were laid openly before him. This gives *me* no concern, but on his own account, because all that has been done by us was done with deliberation, and from motives *purely* and *entirely* disinterested. We were governed only by joint considerations of what was due to Mr. Graves, to the family of Fleming, and, above all, of what promised to be beneficial to the parishioners; for without this last thought I should not have stirred in the affair for the sake of any friend whomsoever.

And now, my dear friend, to a point which I have a good deal at heart. Could the situation of Mr. Fleming be suggested to the Bishop, in such a way as might tend to reconcile him to this disappointment, by placing him in some other eligible curacy for which he might be fit?

The mind of every thinking man who is attached to the Church of England must at this time be especially turned to reflections upon all points of ecclesiastical polity, government, and management ; which may tend to strengthen the Establishment in the affections of the people, and enlarge the sphere of its efficiency. It cannot then, I feel, be impertinent in me, though a layman, to express upon this occasion my satisfaction, qualified as it is by what has been said above, in finding from this instance that our diocesan is unwilling to station clergymen in cures with which they are locally connected. Some years ago, when the present Bishop of London, then of Chester, was residing in this neighbourhood, I took the liberty of strenuously recommending to him not to ordain young men to curacies in places where they had been brought up, or in the midst of their own relatives. I had seen too much of the mischief of this, especially as affecting the functions and characters of ministers born and bred up in the lower classes of society. It has been painful to me to observe the false position, as the French would call it, in which men so placed are. Their habits, their manners, and their talk, their acquaintanceships, their friendships—and, let me say, their domestic affections—naturally and properly draw them one way, while their professional obligations point out another ; and accordingly, if they are sensible of both, they live in a perpetual conflict, and are liable to be taxed with pride and ingratitude, as seeming to neglect their old friends, when they only associate with them with that reserve and under those restraints which their sacred profession enjoins. If, on the other hand, they fall into unrestrained familiarity with the associates of their earlier life and boyish days, how injurious to their

ministry such intercourse would be must flash upon every man's mind whose thoughts have turned for a moment to the subject. Allow me to add a word upon the all-important matter of testimonials, — the case of the rector of Bowness and of Grasmere presses it closely upon my mind. Had the individuals who signed *his* been fitly impressed with the awfulness of the act they were about to engage in, they could not have undertaken it. His character was at that time too notorious. Would it not be a good rule for Bishops to exclude testimonials from relatives and near connections? It is painful to notice what a tendency there is in men's minds to allow even a slight call of private regard to outweigh a very strong claim of duty to the public, and not less in sacred concerns than in civil.

Your hands, my dear friend, have failed, as well as my eyes, so that we are neither of us in very flourishing trim for active correspondence. Be assured, however, I participate in the feelings you express. Last year has robbed me of Coleridge, Charles Lamb, James Losh, Rudd of Trinity, Fleming just gone, and other school-fellows and contemporaries. I cannot forget that Shakespeare, who scarcely survived fifty (I am now near the close of my sixty-fifth year) wrote

That time of life thou mayst in me behold
When yellow leaves, or none, or few, do hang
Upon those boughs, etc.

How much more reason have we to break out in such a strain? Let me hear from you from time to time. I shall feel a lively interest in all that concerns you.

I remain, faithfully yours,

WM. WORDSWORTH.

DCXXI

William Wordsworth to Robert Montgomery

February, 1835.

. . . I cannot conclude without one word of literary advice, which I hope you will deem my advanced age entitles me to give. Do not, my dear sir, be anxious about any individual's opinion concerning your writings, however highly you may think of his genius, or rate his judgment. Be a severe critic to yourself, and, depend upon it, no person's decision upon the merit of your works will bear comparison in point of value with your own. . . . Above all, I would remind you, with a view to tranquillise and steady your mind, that no man takes the trouble of surveying and pondering another's writings with a hundredth part of the care which an author of sense and genius will have bestowed upon his own. Add to this reflection another, which I press upon you — as it has supported me through life — viz. that Posterity will settle all accounts justly; that works which deserve to last will last; and, if undeserving this fate, the sooner they perish the better.

DCXXII

*William Wordsworth to Allan Cunningham*Wednesday Morning,
[Postmark, March 19, 1835.]

My dear Friend,

In extreme hurry I sit down to thank you for your life and edition of Burns, received last night, and for your obliging letter.

It would give me much pleasure to be of any use to you in your meditated edition of the poets, but I am not aware how I can, except by my opinion as to the authors which it might be expedient to add to your selection, or to exclude. This, after conference with Mr. Southey, I should do with great pleasure. . . .

Ever faithfully yours,

WM. WORDSWORTH.

DCXXIII

William Wordsworth to Henry Crabb Robinson

[1835.]

My dear Friend,

We arrived here ¹ on Friday last an hour or two before sunset. . . .

We took three days to come down, the weather being good. I travelled on the outside, which gave me a sight of the town of Coventry with its three spires gilded by a declining sun. Upon comparing notes with Mrs. Wordsworth, at Birmingham, I found that she had known nothing of our having passed through Coventry, and, like other insiders, had seen little. I was pleased also with the country about Trentham, the Duke of Sutherland's. Near it is a valley prettily named the Vale of Springs, or Spring Vale. What a throng of poetic feelings does such a name prompt! When I was at Hampstead the accidental sight of the words "Goulders Hill" painted on a board, as you see the names of streets in London, stirred my mind agreeably in the same way, by recalling an ode of Akenside's written at that place,

¹ Evidently Rydal Mount. — Ed.

where, on recovery from a severe sickness, he visited his friend Dyson, who had been generous to him in the earlier part of his life when the poet started in London as a physician.

. . . The weather here is very sharp, and to-day we have a blustering wind, tearing off the blossoms and twigs from the trees with almost equal disregard. At breakfast, this morning, we received from some unknown friend the *Examiner*, containing a friendly notice of my late volume. Is it discreditable to say that these things interest me little but as they may tend to promote the sale, which — with the prospects of unavoidable expense before me — is a greater object to me, much greater, than it would otherwise have been? The private testimonies which I receive very frequently of the effect of my writings upon the hearts and minds of men are indeed very gratifying, because I am sure *they* must be written under pure influences; but it is not necessarily, or even probably so, with strictures intended for the public. The one are *effusions*, the other *compositions*, and liable — in various degrees — to intermixtures that take from their value. It is amusing to me to have proofs how critics and authors differ in judgment, both as to fundamentals and incidentals.

As an instance of the latter, see the passage where I speak of Horace, quoted in the *Examiner*. The critic marks in italics for approbation certain passages, but he takes no notice of three words, in delicacy of feeling worth, in my estimation, all the rest — “he only listening.” Again, what he observes in praise of my mode of dealing with Nature as opposed to my treatment of human life — which, he says, is not to be trusted — would be reversed, as it has been by many, who hear that I ran into excess in my pictures of the influence of natural

objects, and assign to them an importance which they are not entitled to; while in my treatment of the intellectual instincts, affections, and passions of mankind, I am nobly distinguished by having drawn out into notice the points in which they resemble each other, in preference to dwelling (as dramatic authors must do) upon those in which they differ. If my writings are to last, it will, I myself believe, be mainly owing to this characteristic. They will please for the single cause, "That we have all of us one human heart." Farewell.

W. W.

DCXXIV

William Wordsworth to H. Rogers

THE LODGE, TRINITY COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE,

15th April, 1835.

My dear Rogers,

The papers record the death of your, and let me add my, long-known and long-valued friend, Richard Sharp. Sincerely do I condole with you and with his nearest connections. How a thought of the presence of living friends brightens particular spots! and what a shade falls over them when those friends have passed away! This I have felt strongly in the course of the last twelve months in respect to London, vast as the place is. And even in regard to the Lakes, it makes me melancholy to think that Sharp will visit them no more. If you be in communication with Mrs. Sharp and Miss Kinnaid, pray assure them that Mrs. Wordsworth and I sympathise sincerely with them in their bereavement. . . . I am, and ever shall be,

Firmly yours,

WM. WORDSWORTH.

DCXXV

William Wordsworth to Henry Crabb Robinson

[May, 1835.]

My dear Friend,

. . . Had not my family been in so distressing a state, I should have gone to London by Cambridge about the beginning of next month, which probably would have allowed me the pleasure of seeing you before your departure for the Continent. At present I can entertain no such project, as it seems impossible that my beloved sister can live for any length of time. The extreme heat has been very unfavourable to all our invalids. The thermometer for these last three days has never been under 68° in my sister's room in any of the twenty-four hours, and often at 78° — notwithstanding all our endeavours to moderate the heat. Will you pardon me when I mention that in the midst of all this sorrow and anxiety I have not yet had the courage to look at the Italian verses you sent me. They are, however, carefully preserved, and shall be studied, as soon as I can command myself so as to take any interest in literature of that kind.

Ever your affectionate friend,

W. WORDSWORTH.

DCXXVI

William Wordsworth to Robert Southey

June 25, 1835.

My dear Southey,

My letter of yesterday must have prepared you. All was over before seven in the afternoon. She had no acute suffering whatever, and within a very short time of

her departure — when Dora asked Mr. Carr if something could not be done to make her easier — she opened her eyes in strength, and with a strong and sweet voice, said, “I am quite, I am perfectly comfortable.” Mr. Carr supposes that her debility produced a suffusion on the brain, which was the immediate cause of her death. O, my dear Southey, we have lost a precious friend; of the strength of her attachment to you and yours, you can but imperfectly judge. It was deep in her heart. I saw her within an hour after her decease, in the silence and peace of death, with as heavenly an expression on her countenance as ever human creature had. Surely there is food for faith in these appearances; for myself, I can say that I have passed a wakeful night, more in joy than sorrow, with that blessed face before my eyes perpetually, as I lay in bed. We are all much better than our friends could think possible. God Almighty bless you and yours! Your dear girls have had a loss to which time will never make them insensible; but God is good, as they will feel in all their sorrow. Farewell.

Ever most faithfully yours,
W. W.

DCXXVII

William Wordsworth to Henry Crabb Robinson

RYDAL MOUNT, [June 26, 1835.]

My dear Friend,

I will not distress you with a detail of all that we have feared and hoped and suffered during these last five weeks. One of our anxieties is over, and not that which we thought would first cease. Dear Miss Hutchinson was seized with illness five weeks ago and expired yesterday.

. . . On Monday she sank alarmingly; yesterday at noon a change took place that left no hope of saving her life, and before seven all was over, leaving upon her face as heavenly an expression in the peace and silence of death as ever human creature had.¹ I write through tears, but they are not tears of sorrow. Break this matter to dear Mr. and Mrs. Clarkson as well as you can. My poor sister is very feeble, but we are all in health much better than our friends can think possible. Mrs. Thomas Hutchinson, tell Mrs. Clarkson, has been here some time; and but for her my wife must have sunk under watching and over-exertion. Farewell — God bless you —

Most affectionately yours,

WM. WORDSWORTH.

Pray call at Henry Coleridge's chambers and tell him what has happened and how we are. I hope we shall some of us be able to write to them soon. H. C. will be so good as to inform our good friend, Mrs. Hoare, and also Mrs. Gillman; Mrs. Hoare, or dear Sara, will be so good as to write to Mrs. Gee; and pray tell Miss Lamb.

¹ See the sonnet of the year 1826, beginning, "Even so for me a Vision sanctified," *Poetical Works*, Vol. VIII, p. 37. — Ed.

DCXXVIII

William Wordsworth to Henry Crabb Robinson

Monday, July 6th, [1835.]

My dear Friend,

Gladly would I have replied instantly to your two last affectionate letters, but I could not muster courage.

It will be a week to-morrow since our dear friend¹ was laid in Grasmere churchyard, near two of her sister's children, and where in all probability we shall all be laid one after another. When a beloved friend departs in this way without any organic disease, it is difficult to carry about with one the habit of feeling that she will never be seen again on earth. But no more of this. You are anxious to hear how we are going on. . . .

Messrs. Longmans have paid £280 on my account into the Kendal bank, but I know not what part of that sum could be added to the £300 from the annuities, as my expenses, owing to so much sickness in the family, have been very heavy, and money owing me for my annual expenses has not been paid.

I fear you cannot read this letter. I feel my hand shaking, I have had so much agitation to-day in attempting to quiet my poor sister. . . . Her memory is excellent this morning. I chanced to mutter a line from Dyer's *Grongar Hill*. She immediately finished the passage, reciting the previous line and the two following. Speaking of her faculties, she told me that Miss Hutchinson's vanishing had been a sad shattering to them.

God bless you. Let me repeat my thanks for all your zealous and delicate acts of friendship. My sister begged

¹ Sarah Hutchinson. — Ed.

me to send you her tender love, — again and again most affectionately yours. I do not invite you to the house of mourning; you could not be of any use, and it would only afflict you.

W. WORDSWORTH.

DCXXIX

William Wordsworth to Edward Moxon

RYDAL MOUNT, November 20, 1835.

My dear Sir,

In a few days I hope to have an opportunity of sending such a selection of Lamb's letters, to myself and my family, as appear to me not unfit for immediate publication. There are, however, in them some parts which had better be kept back. . . . I have also thought proper to suppress every word of criticism upon my own poems. . . . The suppressed letters shall not be destroyed. Those relating to my works are withheld, partly because I shrink from the thought of assisting in any way to spread my own praises, and still more as being convinced that the opinions or judgments of friends given in this way are of little value. . . .

On the other page you have the requested epitaph. It was composed yesterday; and, by sending it immediately, I have prepared the way, I believe, for a speedy repentance, as I do not know that I ever wrote so many lines without some retrenchment being afterwards necessary. If these verses should be wholly unsuitable for the end Miss Lamb had in view, I shall find no difficulty in reconciling myself to the thought of their not being made use of, though it would have given me great — very great — pleasure to fulfil her wishes in all points.

The first objection that will strike you, and every one, is its extreme length, especially compared with epitaphs as they are now written ; but this objection might in part be obviated by engraving the lines in double column and not in capitals.

Chiabrera has been my model, though I am aware that Italian churches, both on account of their size and the climate of Italy, are more favourable to long inscriptions than ours. His epitaphs are characteristic and circumstantial, so have I endeavoured to make this of mine ; but I have not ventured to touch upon the most striking feature of our departed friend's character and the most affecting circumstance of his life, namely, his faithful and intense love of his sister. Had I been framing an elegy, or monody, this would and must have been done ; but for seeing and feeling the sanctity of that relation as it ought to be seen and felt, lights are required which could scarcely be furnished by an epitaph, unless it were to touch on little or nothing else. The omission, therefore, in my view of the case was unavoidable ; and I regret it the less, you yourself having already treated the subject in verse with genuine tenderness and beauty. . . .

I cannot conclude without adding that the epitaph, if used at all, can only be placed in the church. It is much too long for an out-door stone, among our rains, damp, etc. . . . Kindest regards.

After an absence of thirteen weeks I only returned home last Wednesday.

W. W.

DCXXX

William Wordsworth to Edward Moxon

November, 1835.

I send you the epitaph again revised. I hope the changes will be approved of. At all events, they better answer my purpose. The lines, as they now stand, preserve better the balance of delicate delineation, the weaknesses are not so prominent, and the virtues placed in a stronger light; and I hope nothing is said that is not characteristic.

If the length makes the above utterly unsuitable, it may be printed with his works as an effusion by the side of his grave; in this case, in some favourable moment, I might be able to add a few lines upon the friendship of the brother and sister.

Affectionately yours,

W. W.

DCXXXI

William Wordsworth to Henry Crabb Robinson

RYDAL MOUNT, Nov. 25th, 1835.

My dear Friend,

I, — M. W., — hold the pen for my husband. Your prompt acceptance of our united invitation was nothing more than your long and oft experienced kindness had led us to expect. We shall rejoice to see you, but upon one condition: that having been so long abroad lately, you

do not on our account set aside the claims which your relatives and friends in the South — particularly your brother — have upon you, by putting off or shortening your visits to them. . . .

At the lodging where the coach will set you down at the foot of our hill you can be accommodated also with a sitting room and attendance. I have been to look at the house this morning; the rooms are well-sized (though low) for a single person, and neatly furnished. The only objection to them is that the situation is too low and somewhat confined; but at this season of the year far less so than in summer, when the leaves are on the trees. The better sitting-room, for you have the choice of two, looks directly up our hill, and commands, now that the trees are bare, rather a cheerful view of Lady Fleming's park. But the great advantage of this lodging lies in being so near us that our intercourse need not be at all dependent upon weather.

Before this reaches you you may probably have seen Moxon or heard from him about our late communication with him, and have learned our determination upon dear Lamb's letters and our wishes respecting them. Therefore, I need not touch further upon that point. As to the lines sent, the more I think of them the more do I feel that their number renders it little less than impossible that they should be used as an epitaph. So convinced am I of this, that I feel strongly impelled — as I hinted to Moxon in my yesterday's letter containing a revised copy of the lines — to convert them into a meditation supposed to be uttered by the side of his grave, which would give me an opportunity of endeavouring to do some little justice to a part of the subject which no one can treat adequately, viz., the sacred friendship which bound the brother and

sister together under circumstances so affecting. Entertaining this view, I have hoped rather than expected that I might be able to put into ten or twelve couplets a thought or feeling which might not be wholly unworthy of being inscribed upon a stone, consecrated to his memory, and placed near his remains. Having, however, thrown off my first feelings already in a shape so different, I wish that some one else — Mr. Talfourd, Mr. Moxon, Mr. Southey, or any other of his friends accustomed to write verse — would write the epitaph. Miss Lamb herself, if the state of her mind did not disqualify her for the undertaking, might probably do it better than any of us.

Before you set off northwards, pray call at Longmans and enquire about my poems, whether the *Yarrow* has been re-printed. If it has, bring down a copy; and if it is not finished, bring as many of the sheets as are struck off. Learn, if you can, what number of the four volumes are still on hand. Also see Mr. Courtenay, and ask Moxon if the engraving from my portrait has been begun. It is often enquired after. You will *see* Mr. Moxon of course. My nephew, John Wordsworth, now lodges at 7 Howard Street, Strand. Pray drop him a line by the second post, telling him when you set off, as he may have something to send. We write these requests with a smile at what your good nature has brought upon you. My sister lived some time in Norfolk when she was young, and fancies that she should like some Norfolk beefins, and has often said she was sure if Mr. Robinson knew how she longed for them, you would send her some. Could you contrive to bring her a box? All kinds of fruit are grateful to her.

With affectionate remembrances from all here,

Ever faithfully yours,

WM. WORDSWORTH.

P.S. — If it be not disagreeable, call and make enquiries in our name after Mr. Rogers, and his sister; and thank him for his letter to me from Ramsgate, which I will answer as soon as I have anything comfortable to say.

Poor dear Miss Lamb! We leave it to your judgment to say everything tender and affectionate, at a fit opportunity, from us. We do feel for, and love her dearly.

W. W.

DCXXXII

Mary Wordsworth to Henry Crabb Robinson

[Nov., 1835.]

My dear Friend,

We heard by a letter from Moxon, dated the 9th, of your arrival in England, and you should not have remained so long without a salutation from Rydal Mount, but that William was from home, and I forwarded the letter to him and depended upon his writing a few lines of greeting to you from Whitehaven. However, he is returned, not having done so, finding that writing was inconvenient to him from a sprain he got some weeks ago in his right arm, and for which he has been using hot sea-baths. He is better. Your presence to William would be inestimable. He wants such a friend to take him out of himself, and to divert his thoughts from the melancholy state in which our poor sister is. Her mind is, I may say, in a state of childishness. . . .

In a few days we shall have an opportunity to forward (which Moxon's letter asks us to do) such portions of Charles Lamb's letters as William chooses to part with. We should like your judgment to be exercised regarding

anything that should be withheld from the public. You know we are very delicate upon the point of publishing the letters of private friends, but we feel that in the case of dear Charles Lamb the objections are not so forcible. The essays he himself gave to the public are so much in the character of his letters. . . .

Believe me, with affectionate regards from us all, to be

Very sincerely yours,

M. WORDSWORTH.

DCXXXIII

William Wordsworth to Edward Moxon

December 6, 1835.

Dear Mr. Moxon,

I send you an epitaph volunteered for Charles Lamb by the son of his old friend Charles Lloyd, to whom I had shown my verses, observing that they were unfit on account of their length. I did the same to Mr. Hartley Coleridge, and asked him to try his powers. Now as he is very ready, and has *great* powers, and retains a grateful affection for our deceased friend, we expect something good and appropriate. Not that it is our wish that anything from this quarter should take the place of what may be produced by Mr. Talfourd, yourself, or any other friend. Mr. Owen Lloyd's verses are not without merit, and would be read with pleasure in many a church, or churchyard, but they are scarcely characteristic of the subject.

I forwarded by the post to-day a Newcastle journal, in which you will find some verses of mine, suggested by the death of the Ettrick Shepherd. They were sent to you on account of our departed friend, and of Mr. Coleridge.

There are two or three mistakes for which the printer is answerable. The adjectives "mortal" and "godlike" are both correct; but "for ripe fruit" should be "o'er ripe fruit." It might be a question for criticism whether the stanza beginning "our haughty life" should not be separated from the foregoing either by asterisks or a break, as if it were the beginning of a second part of the same lyric effusion. . . .

DCXXXIV

*William Wordsworth to Basil Montagu*¹

RYDAL MOUNT, December 10, 1835.

My dear Montagu,

. . . Under this roof we have indeed had our share of affliction, a great part of which continues to this hour; but it must be borne, and we trust for the ultimate benefit of all concerned. In answer to your very friendly offer, I can only say, with most sincere thanks, that it is quite out of our power to profit by it. If my daughter were well enough to go to London, she would be well enough to go anywhere, the seat of her complaint being in the spine; and as to my poor sister, there is no prospect of her being other than a prisoner in her bed or room for the remainder of her days.

I congratulate you heartily on your release from the labour of your profession, not doubting that your mind has resources which will prevent leisure from being a burden.

With kindest remembrances, believe me, my dear Montagu,

Faithfully yours,

WM. WORDSWORTH.

¹ Montagu had invited Wordsworth and his daughter to London.
— ED.

DCXXXV

William Wordsworth to Henry Crabb Robinson

[December 18, 1835.]

My dear Friend,

I have been very uneasy since I sent off the selection of Lamb's letters, as by so doing I seem to sanction a practice which I hold — for the most part — in utter detestation ; viz., that of publishing the casual effusions (and most letters are nothing more) of men recently dead. I was much pleased to learn from the life of Mackintosh that Sir James Scarlet destroyed all letters but those upon business. I wish this to be done towards myself, and I would do it towards others, unless where I thought the writer himself wished their preservation. I earnestly desire you would get a sight of those of Lamb which I have sent to Mr. Moxon, and if they are to be used at all — after what I have said to you, and Mr. Moxon — that you and he would strike out every passage which you think Lamb, or his sister, would object to ; above all, such as you think would give pain to any living individual, or the connections of the dead.

Lamb's submitting to mechanical employment placed him in fine moral contrast with other men of genius, his contemporaries, who — in sacrificing personal independence — have made a wreck of morality and honour, to a degree which it is painful to consider. To me this was a noble feature in Lamb's life, and furnishes an admirable lesson by which thousands might profit.

Your critical objection is valid. It is true that regret is in its nature a passive quality, and deep regret, or deeply-seated regret, would be a better expression than

strong regret. But I used the word, in connection with what follows, to designate regret as spreading itself over a large portion of past time, and including multifarious objects with an active and unsatisfied appetite. This meaning is not sufficiently brought out. Your parenthesis is so unimpassioned and awkward that the faulty passage had better stand as at present with a chance of being overlooked. Besides, I have no doubt that the sheet is struck off long since. To your parenthesis I should even prefer omitting "regrets" altogether, and reading the line thus, "And our fond hopes, so eager in their grasp," or the whole thus :

Heaven out of sight — hopes, wishes, what are they?
 And what is knowledge with its eager grasp?
 The sages the theory, etc.

Still better,

Our hopes, our aims, so eager in their grasp?

. . .

W. W.

DCXXXVI

Mary Wordsworth to Mrs. Marshall

Christmas Eve, [1835.]

. . . Writing with a poet beside me ought not to be an excuse (for bad writing), though at this moment he takes the pen literally out of my hand (to alter a word in one of his poems)! This reminds me of what you say of his alterations or corrections. I must say that he never makes one that does not seem to convince my understanding and judgment, but (like you) not always my feelings. However, we must give him credit for being

right; and we can always cherish, where we like, what we have loved and clung to. I hope that those to whom the poems are new may find a higher — I am sure not a deeper — pleasure from them than we have done. . . .

[Dorothy Wordsworth to Mrs. Marshall, in same letter.]
 . . . How my heart yet beats at the sound of Christmas day!

DCXXXVII

Mary Wordsworth to Mrs. Marshall

RYDAL MOUNT, Dec. 27, [1835.]

. . . For the last fortnight the air has been so mild that her (Dorothy's) windows have allowed free entrance to a pet robin that is almost a constant companion to her. Its nightly perch is often upon a nail from which hangs one of the pictures, with which the walls of her room are now almost covered; and its soft warbling is most delicious and soothing to her feelings. . . .

DCXXXVIII

Dora Wordsworth to Miss Marshall

[No date. 1835.]

. . . You will be as delighted to hear, as I to tell, that our sweet, patient, cheerful invalid continues to gain ground surely though very slowly. . . . She cannot yet read at all to herself, nor can she bear to listen to reading for more than five minutes together, unless it is something she is perfectly familiar with; and yet it appears to her

the shortest winter she ever passed, as her mind has lain perfectly fallow; . . . whereas last year, with all her suffering, her mind was so active that it was truly "a mansion for all lovely forms," and her memory was "a dwelling-place for all sweet sounds and harmonies"; and so her days passed as pleasantly and more profitably (so she tells us) than they had ever done when she was in the full vigour of health and strength. . . . Now, though both mind and body are shorn of the powers of exertion, never a murmur escapes from her. There she lies perfectly still from morning to night, and from night till morning; and whenever you enter her sick chamber, you are greeted with that same bright smile, so full of love and tenderness, which you must know so well. . . .

DCXXXIX

William Wordsworth to Edward Moxon

RYDAL MOUNT, Friday, [1835.]

My dear Mr. Moxon,

Thanks for the verses. They will be quite correct when you have replaced the line,

Otherwise wrought the will of the Most High,
Yet, etc.

I do not forget your friendly invitation. Take care in respect of the Selections that your liberality to me does not injure yourself. I think it probable that I shall be in town in the spring, and if it be after the earlier part of April, if you can make room for me for a little while, I shall be glad.

I have never heard of Hartley's intention to write his father's life, nor do I think it probable, but your message shall be conveyed to him. He is preparing for the press another volume of poems, as I understand, and I shall recommend him to publish with you, if you will undertake the work.

Since the above was written Mrs. Wordsworth has seen Hartley Coleridge. He has no intention of writing his father's life; but his poems and other works he will be glad to publish with you.

Ever faithfully yours,

W. W.

1836

DCXL

*William Wordsworth to Correspondent Unknown*¹

RYDAL MOUNT, January, 1836.

My dear C——,

. . . Now let me tell you, but more for your father's sake than yours, that in a letter which I received from Lord Lonsdale yesterday he generously proposes to endow a new church at Cockermouth with £150 per annum. From a conversation with him in the autumn, I expected he would do as much, though he did not then permit me, as he has done now, to mention it publicly.

W. W.

DCXLI

William Wordsworth to Edward Moxon

4th January, 1836.

. . . At Mr. Southey's, two days ago, I had a peep at the two volumes about Coleridge.² The editor is a man without judgment, and therefore appears to be without feeling. His rule is to publish all the truth that he can scrape together about his departed friend, not perceiving the difference between the real truth and what

¹ Probably his nephew Christopher. — Ed.

² Evidently *Letters, Conversations, and Recollections of S. T. Coleridge*, issued anonymously in 1836; the third edition (1864) bearing the author's name, T. Allsop. — Ed.

appears to him to be true. The maxim *de mortuis nil nisi verum* was never meant to imply that all truth is to be told, only nothing but what is true. The distinction also has escaped his sagacity, and ever will escape those of far superior talent to his, who care not what offence or pain they give to living persons, provided they have come to a conclusion, however inconsiderately, that they are doing justice to the dead. . . .

With kind regards, yours,
W. W.

DCXLII

William Wordsworth to William Rowan Hamilton

RYDAL MOUNT, January 11, 1836.

. . . With much pleasure I have received two letters from you through the hands of my son, for both of which accept my cordial thanks. We took it very kindly that you were so particular in entering into the state of your family and your relatives. We often think with much interest of your sister Eliza, and with a thousand good wishes that her bold adventure may turn out well. If she finds herself at liberty to move about, her sensitive imagination and thoughtful mind cannot but be profitably excited and substantially enriched by what she will see in that most interesting part of the world — Smyrna and the coast of Asia Minor. How should I like, old as I am, to visit those classic shores, and the Holy Land, with all its remembrances, so sweet and solemn!

. . . Mrs. Wordsworth and my daughter have just read the Bishop of Limerick's¹ and Mr. Knox's correspondence with great interest. So should I have done,

¹ Bishop Jebb. — Ed.

but the allowance of daylight is now so short; and I do not venture to read or write at all by candlelight. This is the cause why Mrs. Wordsworth now holds the pen for me. I never shall forget Mr. Knox, to whom you introduced me, nor his eloquent and dignified conversation. I remember we differed upon one point, viz., the inward unchangeableness of Romanism; the opinions which I find expressed by him about the year 1824 are much more in accordance with what mine have always been than those which he expressed during the interview I have alluded to. I wish I had seen more of him. His friend and correspondent, the Bishop of Limerick, as also the editor of the letters, Mr. Forster, I saw more than once at Clapham. The good bishop was so obliging as to send his carriage to London for me, and I passed a night at his house.

Surely I ought to have said before this a word upon the honour thrust upon you by the Lord Lieutenant, in his Majesty's name; and so I should, but the great Bully O'Connell stood in my way, and the Protestant Established Church of Ireland, which I hold precious as my life, seemed to cry out to me, "What honour can come from men who are the slaves of bigots and traitors bent upon my destruction!" But whether Sir William, or plain Mr. Hamilton, be you assured of my affectionate admiration. I *must* congratulate you, however, upon your growing family and your happiness as a married man. Pray present our united regards to Lady Hamilton, and give each of your young philosophers, perhaps they may prove poets, a kiss for my sake. You are growing rich as a father, while I am keeping pace with you as a grandfather. Do let us hear of you, from time to time.

Ever affectionately yours, . . . W. W.

DCXLIII

William Wordsworth to William Rowan Hamilton

RYDAL MOUNT, January 26, 1836.

You being a father and a good churchman, I have no scruple in making the proposal I am about to do. You must know then that my son's new-born is to bear my name; and his father being desirous that he should provide the babe with sponsors from among my particular friends, you — as one whom I especially reckon upon as such, and furthermore, as also bearing the name of William — I hope will not object to stand in that interesting relation to my family. If I am not mistaken, it would give me great pleasure if you will write to my son, who does not feel himself sufficiently acquainted to make this request himself, and propose doing him this honour. I know how much it would gratify both him and his wife. Should you have any conscientious or delicate scruples upon this subject, have no more hesitation in giving me a refusal than I have had in making the proposal. . . .

W. W.

DCXLIV

William Wordsworth to Edward Moxon

January 30, 1836.

My dear Sir,

I am glad you like the verses. I wrote them (how could it be otherwise?) with feeling for the subject. Do with them what you like as to the number of copies you will strike off. I wish for twenty-five. I only submit

that it would not be desirable they should get into the *Athenæum*, or any other periodical, before they come out in this book. I should not like it, nor would it be so respectful to dear Lamb's memory. . . .

W. W.

DCXLV

William Wordsworth to Edward Moxon

February 8, 1836.

My dear Sir,

I am quite ashamed of being so troublesome. Upon reconsidering the verses, I think the sense in one altered passage is not sufficiently clear, if the line

Otherwise wrought the will of the Most High

be omitted. Therefore, let it stand as before. And let the lines that follow this be

Yet in all visitations and all trials
Still they were faithful.

"Through all visitations,"

I think it stood before.

Mr. Pickersgill states and has found so many objections from the engraver, that — being altogether indifferent on my own account respecting the reproductions of the portrait — I have abandoned the project.

Ever faithfully yours,

W. W.

DCXLVI

Mary Wordsworth to Henry Crabb Robinson

Saturday, Feb. 20, [1836.]

My dear Friend,

. . . We have now delightful weather. John and I drove to Bowness on Thursday, to call upon the Pasleys, who are come there to superintend the building of their house; thence round by Elleray.

. . . Your radical friends of Foxhow were detained a few days. . . . I have had a good report of their safe arrival at Rugby. Mrs. Arnold speaks of a number of new admissions, so that John Bull's spite does not promise to injure the school.

. . . Dora, with her tender love, bids me add that she has hitherto considered you a true friend, and hopes you still are so; but if you are aware of the flatteries which, almost every other day, her father has poured in upon him, you would be slow to increase the number, for our sakes. For he is really, she says, growing so vain that she cannot keep him in any kind of order.

William has just said to me that it is rather odd he should learn that the church is strengthened spiritually by his humble exertions, at the moment when under many discouraging circumstances he is doing his utmost for having an additional church built in his native town of Cockermouth.

. . . God bless you, my very dear friend.

Affectionately yours,

M. WORDSWORTH.

DCXLVII

William Wordsworth to Henry Crabb Robinson

March 26, 1836.

My dear Friend,

This will reach you through Mr. Milnes,¹ to whom I have written upon Serjeant Talfourd's copyright bill, which stands for April 11th, Wednesday. Pray do your utmost in every direction to defeat the rapacity of the booksellers and the stupidity of Hume, Grote, Warburton, and such like.

. . . Your University and College are humbugs. All these attempts to make men coöperate, whose opinions are, or — were they conscientious men — ought to be, so widely different, are founded on false views of human nature.

Unless my sonnets are to be sent forth in one volume, I regret having ever consented to the publication. My view was to place them under the eye of the reader at once, but I cannot have an objection to have two titles as Moxon proposes, so that they who prefer the work in two volumes may be gratified. There will be half a dozen new ones.

When I tell you that I have written within these two or three days at least forty letters in support of the Serjeant's bill, you will not be surprised at this abrupt conclusion.

Ever most faithfully yours,

W. WORDSWORTH.

¹ Monckton Milnes, afterwards Lord Houghton. — Ed.

Thanks for the bust. It is an astonishing likeness and will be much valued in this house.

When you see Mr. Rogers tell him that the printing of the sonnets must proceed quickly and regularly or I shall be utterly disgusted by the delay; it interferes with many of my engagements and with my time. You know of old my partiality for Evans. The squib below I let off immediately upon reading his modest self-defence speech the other day.

Said red-ribboned Evans
"My legions in Spain
Were at sixes and sevens;
Now they're famished or slain,
But no fault of mine;
For like brave Philip Sidney
In campaigning I shine,
A true knight of his kidney.
Sound flogging and fighting,
No chief, on my troth,
Ere took such delight in
As I in them both.
Fontarabia can tell
How my eyes watched the foe,
Hernani knows well
That our feet were not slow;
Our hospitals, too,
They are matchless in story,
Where her thousands fate slew
All panting for glory."
Alas for this Hero!
His fame touched the skies,
Then fell below zero,
Never, never to rise!
For him to Westminster
Did prudence convey,

There safe as a spinster
The patriot to play.
But why be so glib on
His feats or his fall?
He's got his red ribbon
And laughs at us all.

DCXLVIII

William Wordsworth to Henry Crabb Robinson

Wednesday, 27th April, 1836.

My dear Friend,

. . . If you see Landor, thank him for *Pericles and Aspasia*, but tell him to leave the Church alone. He has lived too long in Italy to know how the Church of England is now working, and what it stands in need of. Farewell.

Most affectionately yours,

W. W.

[Added in Dora's handwriting.]

One important question is now to be asked. Will you embark with father for any part of the Continent where travelling won't be more fatiguing than a man in his sixty-seventh year ought to undertake?

DCXLIX

William Wordsworth to Henry Crabb Robinson

[April, 1836.]

My dear Friend,

The box has arrived. A thousand thanks, but to whom was the packing entrusted? Several of the books, especially the new-bound Clarendon, have been a good deal

disfigured for want of the precaution being taken of folding them up separately in paper, which ought *always* to be done. We fear you have robbed your own shelves. My little library had long been disgraced by want of Gibbon, disclosing a deficiency you have kindly supplied, and two volumes of my Clarendon¹ had fallen into the opium eater's² hands; they were, however, I believe, a present from him, so I have not much reason to complain in this case. The Chalmers is a great acquisition.³

Have you, dissenter as you are, any friends who would coöperate with a poor poet out of their love of his art and his attempts in it, and out of affection to the Church of England, in his endeavours to assist in building a new church in his native place, where it is much wanted? Sums however small would be acceptable, and I, the said poet, would be happy in being the medium of conveying them to the committee, names mentioned or not as agreeable. The people of Cockermouth are poor, but we have some, and even good, hope of succeeding.

Pray do what you can for me, as they depend a good deal upon my exertions in their behalf.

Dorina thanks you for the Rhine, not inferior she thinks to the former volume.

¹ Doubtless his *History of the Rebellion*. — Ed.

² De Quincey. — Ed.

³ Either George Chalmers's (1742-1825) *Caledonia*, or Alexander Chalmers's (1759-1834) *British Essayists*. — Ed.

DCL

Mary Wordsworth to Mrs. Marshall

RYDAL MOUNT, 7th May, [1836.]

. . . Dear Dorothy is now asleep after having been half an hour in the garden, drawn by James in the garden-chair, and attended by Dora, Jane, and myself. On first going out she wept aloud like a baby, being overcome by the beauty around her, and asked to be taken to a certain border, whence she has lately been supplied with flowers. At first she was too overpowered to look upon it; afterwards she became calm, and enjoyed everything she saw, like her old self. Then, being brought homeward, a new sensation was created when she reached the shady green lawn. On a sudden she began to sing, which she continued to do till James took her into the house. . . .

Affectionately yours,

M. WORDSWORTH.

DCLI

William Wordsworth to Henry Crabb Robinson

44 DOVER STREET [24th June, 1836.]

To-morrow at Serjeant Talfourd's for a couple of days.

My dear Friend,

I have been expecting to hear from, or rather to see, you every day; and now I feel not a little ashamed to tell you by letter what I wished to say *viva voce*, that — after having been two months without seeing the faces of those at

home who are so dear to me — I have not courage to prepare for our continental journey. To add four months, probably, of absence to the time already elapsed I do not feel equal to. Pray come up and set me at ease upon the point of my feeling as if I were serving you ill in declining to go abroad at present.

Ever affectionately yours,

W. WORDSWORTH.

DCLII

Mary Wordsworth to Henry Crabb Robinson

July 4th, [1836.]

Thank you heartily, my dear friend, for your addition to William's letter, which affords us an opportunity of bidding you good bye before your departure, and of telling you how much we feel your good-tempered bearing towards your vacillating fellow-traveller that was to have been. God bless you! I trust you will have an agreeable journeying meanwhile; and if, after all, you are together to prosecute your visit to Rome, may you meet him in a mood of better promise to be a desirable companion than if you were to start now when he either is, or thinks himself, exhausted by the business and bustle of London. . . .

Ever very faithfully yours,

M. WORDSWORTH.

DCLIII

William Wordsworth to Henry Crabb Robinson

July 11th, [1836.]

My dear Friend,

I congratulate you on the decision in your favour, and meet your proposal with a very strong inclination, and even all but a promise and a positive engagement, which, after what has passed, I could not enter into, nor do you wish that I should.

In one point, however, I must deal frankly with you. I feel that I am far from being as strong in body as you, and I must have some more distinct notion than I can form at present of the fatigue which I am to encounter. To spare bodily exhaustion I am prepared to incur more expense than would perhaps suit your plans. I told you that I dreaded long lumberings in foreign diligences, and could not bring myself to having anything to do with them by night. What do you say to our looking out for a companion so that we might proceed at less expense? When the hiring of a carriage was required there would, I think, also be other advantages in a third person, if well chosen.

To this scheme, however, there appears to be one almost insurmountable objection—it would *bind* one to go if possible. Boxall, the painter, described Rome to me as having an execrable climate from the middle of November till the end of January. He said he went in November from Florence to Rome, through dismal cold and rain, and a more uncomfortable residence than he found there for the next two months is not to be imagined. It threw him into an illness, which left him before he had

been a week in Naples, after two months' weary residence in Rome. Rome is said to be delightful in October, but we could not get there in time for that month; if we could, we might proceed to Naples and come back to Rome at a proper season. But all this your experience will be able to throw light upon. It seems to me that the best plan would be to reverse our former scheme and go straight through France down the Saône, and the Rhone, and by the Cornice Road; and return by Venice and the Tyrol, etc., as we should have no time to explore that region so late in the year. But there is time to digest all this.

We are glad you are going into Wales, but you should begin with the Wye, Chepstow, Tintern Abbey, Monmouth, Goodrich Castle, Ross, etc. At Brinsop Court, within six miles of Hereford, live Mr. and Mrs. Hutchinson, and Mr. Monkhouse is not far from them. He lives upon the Wye, at the Store. They would all be delighted to see you. You might from thence go up the Wye, by Hay and Builth, Rhayader, Dwr, and so to the Devil's Bridge and across it through North Wales. From Bangor you might make an excursion to Conway for the castle's sake, and so up the Conway to Llanrwst, and by Capel-Curig back to Bangor, whence you might take the steamer to Liverpool; from Liverpool there is a steamer to Ulverston, from which, if convenient, see Furness Abbey, and come to us by Windermere, up which lake there is at present a boat in connection with the Liverpool steamers to Ulverston. After a few days' stay with us, all being well and promising, I should be delighted to return with you to London, and straight for the Continent; this leading proviso always being borne in mind, that I must not weaken my old frame by fatigue that can be spared.

I have done well to return home ; my conscience as well as my yearnings of heart urged me to it. Indeed, it would have been quite unjust both to myself and you, if I started without first coming hither. I hope this pleasant scheme may be realized. God bless you ; love from all.

Affectionately yours,

W. W.

We had a most pleasant journey hence ; I was delighted with St. Albans and its neighborhood.

DCLIV

William Wordsworth to Henry Crabb Robinson

August, [1836.]

My dear Friend,

Do not think me liable to be turned by every piece of information from every quarter, but I cannot refrain from mentioning what has had a good deal of influence upon my own mind, — the decided opinion of Dr. Arnold that all that I could wish to see in Italy might be seen in three months, and that from the middle of March till the middle of June would be the best season. Lady Davy who was here the other day, and who has been much in Italy, is also of the same opinion. A few days ago I saw a letter from Boulogne, dated the 26th of last month, in which the writer said that the cholera, though not actually in Florence, was in Milan, Genoa, and several other cities, including Rome. Now, though you might not dread the cholera quite so much as I should, I am sure you would have an equal fear of quarantine, not merely on account of loss of time, but because of the wretched manner in which people are huddled together in the places where they are stopped.

So much for generals. For personals I will mention two or three reasons which make me desirous of deferring the commencement of our journey till the middle of February, should it suit you. First, my nephew's affairs are not yet settled. Secondly, I have a wish to superintend the printing of the stereotype edition of my poems, which I can get through before the end of the year, as two presses are proposed to be set to work. Thirdly, my son John will have three months nearly at his disposal, and is anxious to accompany us, if possible. - Lastly, I have a hope that my daughter will improve in health before that time. I have only to add that it would rejoice us all if you would spend your Christmas here, and we would start together in the middle of February.

Dr. Arnold went off yesterday, with a detachment of ten, by the *Lake Tourist*,¹ meaning to take the steamer for Dublin at Whitehaven. Young Bunsen was one of the party.

Ever your faithful friend,

WM. WORDSWORTH.

What more changeful than the sea?
Yet over his great tides
Fidelity presides.

The quotation is by Dora, from the description of herself in *The Triad*; but here applied to the old gentleman, her father, and his changing inclinations.

¹ The name of a Lake Country coach. — Ed.

DCLV

William Wordsworth to John Kenyon

My dear Mr. Kenyon, [1836.]

I won't waste time in thanks, having told you heretofore through Mr. Moxon how much I was obliged by your letter.

You ask how the muses came to say, "weep in the public roads alone." Did you ever attend an execution? Funerals, alas! we have all attended, and most of us must have seen weeping in the public roads on these occasions.

I was a witness to a sight of this kind the other day in the streets of Kendal, where male mourners were following a body to the grave in tears. But for my own part, notwithstanding what has here been said in verse, I never in my whole life saw a man weep *alone* in the roads; but a friend of mine *did* see this poor man weeping *alone*, with the lamb, the last of his flock, in his arms. I hope you are satisfied, and willing that the verse should stand as I have written it.

Dear Mrs. Kenyon was right as to the "bare." The contradiction is in the words only; bare, as not being covered with smoke or vapour; clothed, as being attired in the beams of the morning. Tell me if you approve of the following alteration, which is the best I can do for the amendment of the fault.

The city now doth on her forehead wear
The glorious crown of morning; silent, bare,
Ships, towers, etc.

"Endeavouring, in our English tongue,"¹—you say "Is not this, in an English poem, superfluous?" Surely here

¹ See *The Emigrant Mother*, l. 11.—Ed.

is an oversight on your part ; whether the poem were in English, or French, or Greek is a matter wholly indifferent as to the expression I have used. She came from afar. The emigrant mother came from France, as is told in that other poem, but I do not think it necessary to say, in this latter case, that her griefs found utterance in French ; only that I have put them into verse. But in the instance to which you object it was expedient to specify that, though she came from far, English was her native tongue, which shows her either to be of these islands or a North American. On the latter supposition, while the distance removes her from us, the fact of her speaking our language brings us at once into close sympathy with her.

As to the " old forest of civility," you are, I fear, right ; I say fear, because I may have much trouble in correcting the passage. I had no particular allusion in my mind ; the line before spoke of the " citadels of truth," and the forest was intended, in like manner, as a metaphor to express those usages and habits of civilization, which, from their antiquity, may be compared to a forest whose origin is unknown.

I *do* rejoice at my change of plan : two or three days ago I heard at Lowther that Lady Westmorland had just been stopped at Pavia, on her way to Rome, in consequence of the cholera. I have had a great deal of dry and wearisome labour, of which I do not repent, however, in preparing my poems for the new edition, especially those which were among my first attempts.

I hear from many quarters of the impression which my writings are making, both at home and abroad, and to an old man it would be discreditable not to be gratified with such intelligence, because it is not the language of praise for pleasure bestowed, but of gratitude for moral and intellectual improvement received. Do not suppose,

however, that I am not prepared for the language of censure and discouragement from many quarters. I hear of that also occasionally, and should be sorry were it otherwise; for I should then be sure that the *igneus vigor* or *cælestis origo* did not belong to me, but that I was of the world, worldly, and of the earth, earthy; but too much of this. I trust that, if I am to go to the Continent, I shall see you in passing through London.

My church is, after all, likely to be built and endowed, notwithstanding that you—one of the most valued of my friends—will not assist me. But I know that half a finger's breadth, if it be near enough to the eye, will blind. Mrs. Wordsworth says, "Oh, the imprudent man!"¹ To-morrow we are to have a chapel consecrated within less than three miles of this place; there is no situation out of the Alps, nor among them, more beautiful than that where this building is placed. Mrs. Wordsworth and I walked thither this afternoon. You know the River Brathay. The chapel stands upon a rocky knoll above it, and commands a view of the stream to Langdale Pikes, which this afternoon were white with snow, as was also nearly half the mountainside below them. The meadows were as green as the after-grass could make them, and the woods in the full foliage of many-coloured autumn. I wish you had been with us, and I am sure you would have subscribed for a peal of bells, that their harmony might be wafted up and down the river. How glad we were that we were not dissenters—likewise that we were true Conservatives.

Affectionately yours,

WM. WORDSWORTH.

¹ Alluding, doubtless, to the previous sentence, which he had read to her. — Ed.

DCLVI

William Wordsworth to Correspondent Unknown

Oct. 24, 1836.

. . . I reckon it one of the happinesses of my life to have had few secrets either of my own or of others to take care of. . . . And now let me thank you gravely and cordially for the service you have done me in press-reading the proofs of this publication [the edition of 1836-1837]. We have already got through two volumes and part of a third. . . . I am sorry to say that the first volume has several mistakes, for which I am answerable mainly, having trusted to the printer in several cases where alterations were made in the proofs, without having a revise sent down. *The Excursion* (the last of the six volumes) is one of those already printed. . . . In this I hope few errors will be found, but I have not seen it yet. . . .

WM. WORDSWORTH.

DCLVII

Mary Wordsworth to Henry Crabb Robinson

RYDAL MOUNT, Nov. 1st, 1836.

My dear Friend,

. . . Let me tell you that it always delights us to follow you in your excursions, and that your visit to Bristol was peculiarly interesting. Dora and I were with you in Cottle's sanctum, where some seven or eight years ago we

too were favoured with a sight of the portraits.¹ To the best of my recollection we were most pleased with that of Southey, in which we saw, or fancied we saw, the spirit of the embryo poet. Dora said that of her father reminded her of her brother John. With regard to the benevolent regicide's intended book, I need only say that he has behaved disingenuously. If Southey saw all the manuscript he could not, and does not, approve. The story is too long and too intricate for me to enter upon. William (who was shewn letters by Judge Coleridge which will prove that Cottle was resolved to publish the objectionable matter before he received that letter of Mr. Gillman's, which he afterwards asserted had determined him to publish) will tell you all about it. Southey will see Cottle soon. He has commenced making progress with his son, and will skim the south and west of England to introduce Cuthbert to his old friends, and the interesting haunts of his youth, calculating upon an absence from Keswick of at least three months.

I hope your expectation of receiving Lamb's letters from Bristol are fulfilled. I had much rather they were really in Talfourd's hands than left to the mercy of C.² With you I do not regret the publication of our dear friend's *Remains* (to use the fashionable designation). Dora, who is rummaging her portfolio, has just given me a copy of one of his invaluable letters, which I will enclose, thinking it not an improper one to publish, as expressing a right feeling in his own delightful manner and playful language. I trust this, and all the letters we have sent,

¹ The portraits of Wordsworth, Coleridge, Southey, and Lamb, drawn by Robert Hancock, which are now in the National Portrait Gallery. — Ed.

² Cottle. — Ed.

may be preserved, and restored to us. We have received — but I have scarcely looked into — Coleridge's *Literary Remains*.

The tragedy¹ is in existence; but say nothing about it, lest its destruction should follow.

Mrs. Hemans's *Letters* we consider a very flimsy publication, and not at all likely to support the opinion of those who have extolled her genius. I must not say it disappoints me. From my personal knowledge it is exactly what I should have expected. But we have strong evidence that her mind was steadied, and she became much more interesting, after she went to Dublin, that is, she discarded what to us seemed to be a lightness and affectation of manner. Mr. and Mrs. Graves, who saw much of her in Dublin, to the last quite revered her, and you know they are sensible persons not likely to be carried away by what is superficial. Poor woman! she was always sorely tried — and a beautiful trait in her character was that she never uttered a complaint of her husband.

You ask if William ever wrote an epigram. I believe he once did; and, if I am not mistaken, I will send it in my next. I shall not have time or opportunity perhaps at present.

He and his son W. are journeying to-day from Brighton, where they met on Saturday, the father going from Whitehaven. Last Tuesday he accompanied Lady F. Bentinck thither to pay his respects to the Lowther family, as being more convenient to him (in this season of business) than if he had gone to Lowther, where a longer visit would have been looked for. The proofs have been forwarded during his week's absence, and no time has been

¹ *The Borderers*. — Ed.

lost. He gets on with his work very well. The juvenile pieces cost him much labour, but then he had a useful assistant in Mr. Quillinan, and his presence here was a godsend to me. . . .

Ever faithfully, your obliged and affectionate,

M. W.

DCLVIII

William Wordsworth to Thomas Noon Talfourd

RYDAL MOUNT, November 28, [1836.]

My dear Mr. Talfourd,

Yesterday brought me the second edition of your drama,¹ together with your very friendly note. Part of the play was read aloud last evening and I finished it this morning. . . . You have most ably fulfilled your own purpose, and your poem is a distinguished contribution to English literature. I reserve the sonnets as a *bonne bouche* for to-morrow. But I must tell you that Mrs. Wordsworth read me the second preface, which is written with much elegance of style and a graceful modesty. I cannot help catching at the hope that, in the evening of life, you may realize those anticipations which you throw out. Chaucer's and Milton's great works were composed when they were far advanced in life. So, in times nearer our own, were Dryden's and Cowper's; and mankind has ever been fond of cherishing the belief that Homer's thunder and lightning were kept up when he was an old man and blind. Nor is it unworthy of notice that the leading interest attached to the name of Ossian is connected with gray hairs, infirmity, and privation.

¹ Doubtless his tragedy of *Ion*, first published in 1836, but privately printed in two previous editions, those of 1835 and 1836. — Ed.

God bless you! I have not mentioned Lamb's epitaph, having said all I have to say on that subject to Mr. Moxon and Mr. Robinson. Let me, however, be excused for adding that I was sorry to see the italics at the close of the printed copy sent me down to-day. Mrs. Wordsworth takes to them all, except those in the last line. That upon the word "her" is the only one I approve of, or wish to have retained.¹

Ever faithfully and affectionately yours,

WM. WORDSWORTH.

DCLIX

William Wordsworth to James Montgomery

[RYDAL MOUNT, Nov. 30, 1836.]

My dear Friend,

Through the kindness of Mr. Younge your volumes, and the little book belonging to my daughter,² which you have been so good as to enrich with a most valuable contribution, were received yesterday at Rydal Mount. For these tokens of your regard, and for the accompanying letter, accept our joint thanks. I can assure you with truth that from the time I first read your *Wanderer of Switzerland*, with the little pieces annexed, I have felt a lively interest in your destiny as a poet; and though

¹ See the notes to the privately printed editions of lines *Written after the Death of Charles Lamb*. Wordsworth's *Poetical Works*, Eversley edition, Vol. VIII, pp. 18-24. — Ed.

² An album, which contained lines by Wordsworth, Coleridge, Southey, Scott, Wilson, De Quincey, Campbell, etc. See *Memoirs of James Montgomery* by John Holland and James Everett (1854). — Ed.

much out of the way of new books, I have become acquainted with your works, and with increasing pleasure, as they successively appeared. It might be presumptuous in me were I to attempt to define what I hope belongs to us in common; but I cannot deny myself the satisfaction of expressing a firm belief that neither morality nor religion can have suffered from our writings; and with respect to *yours* I know that both have been greatly benefited by them. Without convictions of this kind all the rest must, in the latter days of an author's life, appear to him worse than vanity. My publisher has been directed to forward to you (I suppose it will be done through Messrs. Longmans) the first volume of my new edition, and the others as they successively appear. As the book could not be conveniently sent to you through my hands, I have ventured to write a few lines upon a slip of paper to be attached to it,¹ which I trust will give you a pleasure akin to what I received from the lines written by your own hand on the fly-leaf of your first volume. With earnest wishes that time may deal gently with you as life declines, and that hopes may brighten and faith grow firmer as you draw nearer the end of your earthly course, I remain, my dear sir,

Faithfully yours,

W. WORDSWORTH.

¹ The following were the lines: "In admiration of genius, and as a grateful token of profound respect for the pure and sacred uses to which that genius has been devoted, these volumes are offered to James Montgomery by his sincere friend, William Wordsworth. Rydal Mount, Nov. 30, 1836."—Ed.

DCLX

Mary Wordsworth to Henry Crabb Robinson

[19 Dec., 1836.]

My dear Friend,

Last evening, when we were all sitting drowsily over the fire, I sagely observed, "I think Mr. R. has cut us"; to which Dora replied, "Will the sun cut us?" Truly, however, *he* has nearly done so of late; but indeed, if you will not come to see us, you ought now and then to send us one of your nice close-written letters to pore over, to break the chain of those everlasting proofs that Mr. Evans sends us day after day to blind our eyes with.

Ever faithfully yours, with our united love,

M. WORDSWORTH.

DCLXI

William Wordsworth to Edward Moxon

[1836.]

My dear Sir,

. . . I entirely concur with you in all you say, and if we can get the three thousand disposed of in a reasonable time, we can try our fortunes with illustrations. Messrs. Stone and Judkin have offered drawings gratis. An artist whom I met with the other day promised to send me a finished drawing from a sketch he had made of the valley in which I have placed "the Solitary," and which would be an appropriate ornament for *The Excursion*. I have no doubt that I could procure drawings from various artists, so that the expense would be confined to engraving and striking off. Many years ago I mentioned to

Messrs. Longmans a scheme of printing in one volume for the purpose you advert to, but they thought it would leave so little profit to me that it would be ineligible. I did not press the matter upon them, though I was unconvinced.

We have not yet seen *The Excursion*, but when it reaches me, which it may do along with twelve copies of the other volume (and the sooner the better), it shall be carefully looked over, and the *errata* made out.

I am convinced that if any alterations be made in the proofs, such as one is tempted often to make, it is impossible to have a book correctly printed without a revise. There are now and then blunders in rhyme, tense, and metre, which are inconceivable; some of which, however, are not always to be ascribed to the printers, but arise from neglect on our part (when a change has been made) to erase the old text.

Let the copy of *The Excursion*, which you send down to have the *errata* made out, be bound up in cloth before it comes, and pray send also a print to bind up with the sheets of the first volume, which were sent for the same purpose. . . .

[He then speaks of Moxon's very generous arrangements with him as compared with previous ones.] . . .

DCLXII

William Wordsworth to Edward Moxon

[1836.]

In the first volume of this edition the political sonnet, beginning

What if our numbers barely could defy,
and the ecclesiastical sonnet, beginning

Coldly we spake. The Saxons overpowered,
are new.

In the *After-thought*, beginning

Oh Life! without thy chequered scene,

the second stanza is new; also a stanza in *The Three Cottage Girls*. In the fifth volume two poems from *The Evening Voluntaries*, one of seventy-two lines, the other of fifty; also the *Bird of Paradise* poem, an *Epitaph from Chiabrera*, and the *Lines to the Memory of Charles Lamb* and *Hogg*, are new.

The value of this edition — as hereafter will be universally admitted — lies in the pains which have been taken in the revisal of so many of the old poems, in the remodeling and often the rewriting of whole paragraphs, which you know has cost me great labour, and I do not repent of it. In the poems lately written I have had comparatively little trouble. . . .

1836.

[Penciled on the manuscript of Barron Field's *Memoirs of the Life and Poetry of William Wordsworth*, begun in 1836, there is the following side-note by the poet :]

"In the foregoing there is frequent reference to what is called Mr. W's. 'theory,' and his 'preface' to *Lyrical Ballads*. I will mention that I never cared a straw about the 'theory,' and the 'preface' was written at the request of Mr. Coleridge, out of sheer good nature. I recollect the very spot — a deserted quarry in the Vale of Grasmere — where he pressed the thing upon me; and but for that it would never have been thought of. I would have written many things, like the essay upon epitaphs, out of kindness to him, in *The Friend*; but he always put me off by saying, 'You must wait till my principles are laid down, and then I shall be happy to have your contributions.' But the principles never were laid down, and the work fell to the ground.

"As I never was fond of writing prose, and required some incitement to do so, I rather regret having been prevented in this way by my dear friend."

[Commenting on a passage in Hazlitt's *Spirit of the Age* to the following effect (as quoted by Barron Field in his manuscript *Memoirs*), "We do not think our author has any cordial sympathy with Shakespeare," Wordsworth wrote in (or after) 1836 :]

"This is monstrous. I extol Chaucer and others, because the world at large knows little or nothing of their merits. Modesty, and a deep feeling how superfluous a thing it is to praise Shakespeare, have kept me

often, and almost habitually, silent upon that subject. Who thinks it necessary to praise the sun?"

[Further on Hazlitt wrote, "It is mortifying to hear him speak of Pope and Dryden, whom, because they have been supposed to have all the possible excellences of poetry, he will allow to have none." On this Wordsworth wrote:]

"Monstrous again. I have ten times more knowledge of Pope's writings, and of Dryden's also, than ever this writer had. To this day I believe I could repeat, with a little previous rummaging of my memory, several thousand lines of Pope. But if the beautiful, the pathetic, and the sublime be what a poet should chiefly aim at, how absurd is it to place those men amongst the first poets of their country! Admirable are they in treading their way, but that way lies almost at the foot of Parnassus."

1837

DCLXIII

William Wordsworth to Edward Moxon

[1837.]

. . . I am quite at ease in regard to the reception which writings, that have cost me so much labour, will meet with in the end. I can truly say that I have not the least anxiety regarding the fate of this edition. The labour I have bestowed in correcting the style of those poems, now revised for the last time according to the best of my judgment, no one can ever estimate. The consequence of this sort of work is that progress bears no proportion to pains, and that hours of labour are often entirely thrown away, ending in a passage being left as I found it. . . .

DCLXIV

William Wordsworth to R. Shelton Mackenzie

RYDAL MOUNT, Jan. 24, 1837.

. . . If there be in America such a demand for English literature as your information respecting the recent edition of my poems implies, is it not reasonable that English authors should have some compensations in the

way of copyright in that country, particularly as American authors have that privilege in England? . . . In a day or two the printing of the last volume of the edition of my poems now going through the press will be commenced. . . .

DCLXV

William Wordsworth to Henry Crabb Robinson

RYDAL MOUNT, Jan. 28th, [1837.]

My dear Friend,

Moxon tells us you have returned to town, and we trust you have left your family more reconciled to their heavy loss than you venture to hope. The blessings of Christianity are in nothing more deeply felt than in its power to dispose the mind to resignation under the pressure of like afflictions ; and not only to do this, but to turn them into sources of something more than cheerfulness, as being more exalted than mere cheerfulness can be.

Dr. Arnold and his family are here, and have been enjoying themselves much. The doctor takes very long walks, and I sometimes fear Mrs. A. is tempted to do more in this way than she ought. The winter has been with us, I should say, an agreeable one ; on account of its great variety — frost, snow, rain, bright and gleamy sunshine (such as we have had to-day, the mountains being most beautiful, and we have had many such days). We have had primroses in bloom through the whole of it.

In two or three days I hope the printing of my last volume will be begun. The whole of the verses are corrected for the press ; but I must have another tug at the postscript on the Poor Laws, and other things, in which I wish you were to help. Mary wishes it still more.

What do you think of an edition of twenty thousand of my poems being struck off at Boston, as I have been told on good authority is the case? An author in the English language is becoming a great power for good or evil, if he writes with spirit.

Now for our travels — I trust I shall be ready to start from home by the end of the third week in February. I shall land Dora at Leamington, where I am obliged to stay at least two days; I then go direct to town. I hope this will suit you, but pray write immediately and let me know what way we should best take. I suppose it will be to enter Italy by the Cornice road. How can we most agreeably and best get thither? I must repeat that I am not equal to lumbering night and day in a French diligence, else we might go that way to Châlon-sur-Saône, and so float down that river and the Rhone to Avignon; but in this I submit entirely to your experience. Here let me say that I have lately received a most friendly letter from Barron Field, inviting us to the south of Spain, but it is out of the question at this time of the year; for never will I trust myself on the Atlantic in a steamboat between the autumnal and vernal equinox. Nor would you, I think, if you read a most interesting letter which we had lately from Mr. Quillinan, giving an account, poor fellow, of his wretched situation with his daughter and forty passengers, who were on the brink of destruction off Cape Finisterre, and in much danger for five days, all owing to the rascality of the owners and agents of the steam vessel in sending her out again at that season, a week after her return from Madeira and Gibraltar, when, as the head engineer told Mr. Quillinan after their disaster, she stood in need of repairs which would have taken at

least three weeks. I wish you could see Mr. Quillinan's detail, for it is very touching and beautifully written.

It is late, and I must conclude. I have been seven hours walking this day, a blank post day to London giving me a holiday. Do not imagine from this — bravado as it may seem — that I am too youthful to be your companion. Alas ! I feel how far, how very far I am below you in muscular strength. But let me be thankful for what is left. Farewell, with love from all.

Ever most faithfully yours,

W. WORDSWORTH.

DCLXVI

William Wordsworth to Henry Crabb Robinson

RYDAL MOUNT, 11th Feb., 1837.

My dear Friend,

Thanks for your letter, the reasonableness of which throughout I acknowledge. My present wish is, if you approve, to go from Brighton by steam to Dieppe ; thence to Rouen and Paris. This shortens the land journey much. Then to Châlon and down the Saône and Rhone, and by all means by the Cornice road forwards into Italy.

I like your account of your friend, and shall be glad that he or any other eligible person should accompany us. There are many reasons why three persons are preferable to two, though of course there are objections. My son has spent too much money about his new house to be able to go along with us.

Now, my dear friend, consult with Mr. Moxon as to how my last volume can be pushed through the press as fast as possible. All the copy is in the hands of the

printer except the postscript, which I would leave to be done by Mrs. W. and my clerk. There is nothing save the printing of this work to prevent our setting off at once. . . .

DCLXVII

William Wordsworth to Henry Crabb Robinson

[Thursday, March 2, 1837.]

My dear Friend,

We have just received your second letter. This is Thursday, and on Monday morning we mean to quit Rydal, hoping to reach Manchester that night, Birmingham on Tuesday night, whence Mrs. Wordsworth will hasten to her brother's, and we two¹ will be, I hope, at Rugby² early on Wednesday. On Friday I shall proceed to London, and after a few days — very few — given to friendship under the roof of Miss Fenwick, to calling on other friends, and to business, passport, etc., I shall be eager to depart, in order to have the benefit of the spring of Italy and its beauty as early as possible. I say this, being well aware that you will readily meet my wishes. Mrs. Wordsworth confides in our united prudence, and for myself I have not a jot more fear or apprehension than I should have at home of being carried off by influenza, apoplexy, palsy, or any other of death's ministers.

I long to see you that we may plan our journey and be off with as little delay as possible. We have now here the most beautiful weather, celandines and daisies smiling upon the sun, in abundance. I trust that the Stamp office

¹ I.e. himself and Dora. —Ed.

² In Dr. Arnold's house. — Ed.

will have no objection to rather a prolonged stay on my part. I cannot banish the hope of having a peep at Sicily, if you approve, and the steam-boat to Palermo shall be found doing its duty.

I still incline to going by Dieppe to Rouen, and so on to Paris. The only part of the journey which is to me uninviting is the space between Paris and Châlon-sur-Saône. Nismes we shall see if you approve. Farewell.

Most affectionately yours,
W. W.

DCLXVIII

William Wordsworth to Robert Southey

PORTUGAL STREET, LONDON, Saturday Morning,
[March 18, 1837.]

My dear Southey,

To-morrow morning Mr. Robinson and I depart by the steam-boat for Calais. I cannot leave England without saying farewell to you, and the expression of good wishes and prayers for yourself, your dear daughters, their afflicted mother, your son, and all your family.

I have just been a week under the roof of our excellent friend, and enjoying the company of Henry Taylor.

I will now transcribe a few words from a letter of Mr. Quillinan addressed to Dora, upon which for Landor's sake I shall make no comment. I received the letter this morning, and never heard a word on the subject the passage treats of.

"What has Mr. Wordsworth done to that Welsh furioso, that Landor the Savage, to excite his madness to such ludicrous malignity and grandiloquent vituperation? Madmen are sometimes very subtle in malice. What of his

trying to blow up a flame of discord between your father and Mr. Southey! as if two such long-trying friends could quarrel at this time of day about the opinion that one or the other might or might not entertain as to the value of the other's poetry. Byron or Landor might give up an old friend for such a cause, but Southey is too loyal-minded to believe that W. ever seriously disparaged his talents, or to be very irate if he really had had the bad taste to do so. I am sorry for Mr. S., for Landor is also a very old and prized friend of his. It is remarkable with respect to L. himself, that he is the man of all the literary men of the day, Southey perhaps excepted [he forgets Coleridge or speaks perhaps only of the living,] to whose ability and classical attainments I have most frequently heard your father bear testimony, and that in the most decided manner. His wrath at Mr. Wordsworth for having plagiarized his lines about the shell is capital fun."

Thus far Mr. Quillinan, and not a word of all this did I ever see or hear of before. Farewell again, and again.

Ever yours,

W. W.

DCLXIX

William Wordsworth to Mary Wordsworth

TOULON, 8th April, 1837.

. . . I will just mention what pleased me most. The day at Vacluse, where I was enchanted with the power and beauty of the stream, and the wildness and grandeur of the rocks, and several minor beauties which Mr. R. has not noticed, and which I should have particularised but for this blinding cold. I was much pleased with Nismes,

with Marseilles, but most of all with the drive between Marseilles and Toulon, which is singularly romantic and varied. From a height above Toulon, as we approached, we had a noble view of the purple waters of the Mediterranean, purple no doubt from the state of the atmosphere; for at Marseilles, where we first saw it, the colour was not different from the sea of our own island. At Nismes the evening was calm, the atmosphere unusually clear, and the air warm, not from its own temperature, but from the effect of the sun. I there first observed the stars, as appearing brighter and at a greater variety of depths, i.e. advancing one before the other more than they do with us. . . . One of the few promises of summer which we have had is the peach-blossom abundantly scattered over some parts of the country, and very beautiful, especially when neighboured by the cypress, a tree that is plentiful in this part of the south of France. . . .



DCLXX

William Wordsworth to Dorothy Wordsworth

[NICE,] April 10th, [1837.]

My dearest Sister,

. . . Thus far we have rather seemed to be flying from the spring than approaching it. Yesterday we came from a place called Luc to Cannes. It snowed, it hailed, it rained, it blew, and lucky it is for you, notwithstanding the beauty of the country, that you are not with us. . . . The olive groves, when they first made their appearance, looked no better than pollard willows of bushy size; but they are now become trees, oftener a good deal larger than our largest hollies, though I have seen none so large as our

best birch-trees. They suffice to give a sylvan character to the whole country, which was long wanting. Orange-trees also now occur frequently, in plots ; and on entering this town we first saw them with the fruit on. . . . At Cannes we saw the villa which, with a taste sufficiently odd, the owner of Brougham Hall is building there. Beautiful and splendid as the situation is, I should much prefer Brougham Hall, with its Lowther woods and two flowing streams, clear and never dry. Imagine to yourself a deeply indented bay like this,  ; on the right hand lofty mountains, and on the left  hand, the ground sinking down into a low point of land, so as almost to meet an island upon which stands a fortress, famous as being the place where the man of the *masque de fer*¹ was confined. Such is the general description of the bay of Cannes. The town lies behind the projection, under which I have placed a cross ; that projection is of rock, and adorned with the ruins of a castle, with a church still in use, and also with some decayed buildings of a religious kind. . . . Lord B.'s villa stands upon olive and orange groves that slope down to the Mediterranean, distant about a quarter of a mile or less, a narrow beach of yellow and smooth sand being interposed. Broken ground runs behind the house, scattered over with olive and other fruit-trees, also some pines ; but the frost had sadly nipped the oranges, and their leaves were scattered pretty thick under the trees. If the dry channels of the ravines worn by the occasional floods were constantly filled with pure foaming water, and the rocks were of less

¹ "Count Er'colo Anto'nio Mattio'li, Senator of Mantua and private agent of the duke Ferdinand Charles, imprisoned twenty-four years for deceiving Louis XIV in a secret treaty for the purchase of the fortress of Casal, the key of Italy."—*H. G. A. Ellis*.—Ed.

crumbling material — they are a sort of sandstone — this situation would be enviable, and yet still it would want our oaks and birches, etc., as it does actually want the chestnut and walnut trees that adorn, as you know well, many parts of the north of Italy and Switzerland. Do not think I say too much of Cannes when I tell you that beyond the left or eastern horn of this bay, and near the road leading to Antibes, which, as the map will show, is the next town on the road leading from Cannes to Nice, Bonaparte disembarked from the island of Elba. The postillion pointed out the spot. Antibes is the frontier town of France.”

DCLXXI

William Wordsworth to Dorothy Wordsworth

ROME, 27th April, [1837.]

. . . Though I have seen the Coliseum, the Pantheon, and all the other boasted things, nothing has in the least approached the impressions I received from the inside of St. Peter's. . . .

I have been enchanted with the beauty of the scenery in innumerable places, though almost in full as many there is a deplorable want of beauty in the surface, where the forms are fine. Speaking of the Apennines in contradistinction to the maritime Alps, for one scarcely can say where one begins and the other ends, I should say that, as far as I have seen, they are both in beauty and grandeur immeasurably inferior, often lumpish in their forms, and oftener still harsh, arid, and ugly on their surface. Besides, these mountains have an ill habit of sending down

torrents so rapidly that the rivers are perpetually changing their beds ; and in consequence the valleys, which ought to be green and fertile, are overspread with sand and gravel. But why find fault when much that I have seen is so enchanting ! We had scarcely been two hours in Rome when we walked up to the Pincian hill, near our hotel. The sun was just set, but the western sky glowed beautifully. A great part of the city of modern Rome lay below us, and St. Peter's rose on the opposite side ; and, for dear Sir George Beaumont's sake, I will mention that at no great distance from the dome of the church on the line of the glowing horizon was seen one of those broad-topped pines, looking like a little cloud in the sky, with a slender stalk to connect it with its native earth. I mention this because a friend of Mr. Robinson's whom we had just accidentally met told us that this very tree which I admired so much had been paid for by our dear friend, that it might stand as long as nature might allow. . . .

DCLXXII

William Wordsworth to Mary and Dorothy Wordsworth

May 6, [1837.]

. . . Several times I have been at St. Peter's, have heard mass before the Pope in the Sistine Chapel, and after that seen him pronounce the benediction upon the people from a balcony in front of St. Peter's, and seen his Holiness scatter bits of paper from aloft upon the multitude, indulgences, I suppose. . . .

The Monte Mario commands the most magnificent view of modern Rome, the Tiber, and the surrounding country.

Upon this elevation I stood under the pine, redeemed by Sir G. Beaumont, of which I spoke in my former letter. I touched the bark of the magnificent tree, and I could almost have kissed it out of love for his memory. One of the most agreeable excursions we have made was with Miss Mackenzie and Mr. Collier to the tomb of Cecilia Metella, and the other antiquities in its neighbourhood. This was on the first of May. The air was clear and bright, and the distant hills were beautifully clothed in air, and the meadows sparkling with rich wild-flowers. In our ramble, after alighting from the carriage, we came to the spot which bears the name of the Fountain of Egeria, but this is all a fiction ; nevertheless, the grotto and its trickling water, and pendent ivy, and vivid moss have enough of poetry and painting about them to make the spot very interesting, independent of all adjuncts, whether of fact or fiction. . . . The only very celebrated object which has fairly disappointed me, on account of my ignorance, I suppose, is the Pantheon. But after all it is not particular objects, with the exception perhaps of the inside of St. Peter's, that make the glory of this city ; but it is the boundless variety of combinations of old and new, caught in ever-varying connection with the surrounding country, when you look down from some one or other of the seven hills, or from neighbouring eminences not included in the famous seven. To-morrow we are going into the Campagna to see a sheep-shearing upon the farm of a wealthy peasant, who lives in that sad and solemn district, — as I believe it is, around his abode, — which lies about five miles along the Appian Way. And there this hospitable man dwells among his herds and flocks with a vast household, like one of the Patriarchs of old. . . .

DCLXXIII

William Wordsworth to Dorothy Wordsworth

ROME, May 9, [1837.]

. . . The spot from which I write is surrounded by romantic beauty, and every part of it renowned in history or fable. The lake of Nemi is the celebrated Speculum Dianæ, and that of Albano is still more famous, as you may read in Livy the historian. The window of the room from which I am writing has a full view of the Mediterranean in front. The house was formerly a palace of the King of Spain; in the court below is a fountain, water spouting from the mouths of two lions into a basin, and a jet *d'eau* throwing up more, that falls back into the same basin, thence descends a flight of steps eighty in number, into a large Italian garden; below that the grass falls in a slope thickly set with olive, vine, and fruit trees; then comes a plain, or what looks like one, with plots of green corn, that look like rich meadows, spreading and winding far and wide; then succeeds a dusky marsh; and lastly, the Mediterranean Sea. All this tract is part of the ancient Latium, the supposed kingdom of Æneas, which he wrested along with the fair Lavinia from Turnus. On the right, a little below the hotel, is a stately grove of ilex belonging to the Palace or Villa Doria. . . .

DCLXXIV

William Wordsworth to Mary Wordsworth

SALZBURG, July 5, [1837.]

. . . I have, however, to regret that this journey was not made some years ago, — to regret it, I mean, as a poet ; for though we have had a great disappointment in not seeing Naples, etc., and more of the country along the Apennines not far from Rome, — Horace's country for instance, and Cicero's Tusculum, — my mind has been enriched by innumerable images, which I could have turned to account in verse, and vivified by feelings which earlier in my life would have answered noble purposes in a way now they are little likely to do. But I do not repine ; on the contrary, I am very happy. . . . Absence in a foreign country, and at a great distance, is a condition for many minds, at least for mine, often pregnant with remorse. Dearest Mary, when I have felt how harshly I often demeaned myself to you, my inestimable fellow-labourer, while correcting the last edition of my poems, I often pray to God that He would grant us both life, that I may make some amends to you for that, and all my unworthiness. But you know into what an irritable state this overstrained labour often put my nerves. My impatience was ungovernable, as I *then* thought, but I now feel that it ought to have been governed. You have forgiven me, I know, as you did then ; and perhaps that somehow troubles me the more. I say nothing of this to you, dear Dora, though you also have had some reason to complain. . . .

How sorry I am, dear Dora, for poor Mr. Hallam ; he had just been touring in the beautiful country where now

we are before he lost his son so suddenly.¹ Beautiful indeed this country is ; in a picturesque and even poetic point of view more interesting than most of what we have seen. It is something between the finest parts of Alpine Switzerland and the finest parts of Great Britain ; I mean in North Wales, Scotland, and our own region. In many particulars it excels Italy ; also, greatly indeed, the south of France. The mountains are finely formed, and the vales not choked up, nor the hill-sides disfigured by the sort of cultivation which the sunshine of Italy puts there-upon — vines, olives, citrons, lemons, and all kinds of fruit-trees. Yesterday we passed through a country of mountain, meadow, lawn, and the richest wood spread about with all the magnificence of an everlasting park. . . .

DCLXXV

William Wordsworth to Mary Wordsworth

MUNICH, Monday, July 17, [1837.]

. . . At present, I consider our tour finished, and all my thoughts are fixed upon home, where I am most impatient to be, . . . particularly as there are (as must be the case with all companions in travel) so many things in habit and inclination in which Mr. R. and I differ. Upon these I shall not dwell at present, as the only one I care about is this. He has no home to go to but chambers, and wishes to stay abroad, at least to linger abroad, which I, having the blessing of a home, do not. Again, he takes delight in loitering about towns, gossiping, and attending reading-rooms, and going to coffee-houses ; and at *table*

¹ Arthur Henry Hallam. See *In Memoriam*. — Ed.

d'hôtes, etc., gabbling German, or any other tongue, all which places and practices are my abomination. In the evenings I cannot read, as the candlelight hurts my eyes, and I have therefore no resource but to go to bed, while I should like exceedingly, when upon our travels, if it were agreeable to him, to rise early ; but though he will do this, he dislikes it much, so that I don't press it. He sleeps so much at odd times in the day that he does not like going to bed till midnight. In this, and a hundred other things, our tastes and habits are quite at variance, though nobody can be more obliging in giving up his own ; but you must be aware it is very unpleasant for me to require this. In fact, I have very strong reasons for wishing this tour, which I have found so very beneficial to my mind, at an end for the sake of my body. . . .

A man must travel alone — I mean without one of his family — to feel what his family is to him ! How often have I wished for James to assist me about the carriage, greasing the wheels (a most tedious employment), fastening the baggage, etc., for nothing can exceed the stupidity of these foreigners. Tell him how I wish I had been rich enough to bring him along with me ! . . . God bless you all ! . . .

Thursday Morning, 20th.

. . . I am quite tired of this place¹ ; the weather has been very bad, and after the galleries close, which is at twelve o'clock and one, I have nothing to do ; and as I cannot speak German, time moves very heavily. The Ticknors are here, and I have passed a couple of hours every evening with them. God bless you again ! . . .

¹ Munich. — Ed.

DCLXXVI

William Wordsworth to Henry Reed

LONDON, August 19, 1837.

My dear Sir,

Upon returning from a tour of several months upon the Continent I find two letters from you awaiting my arrival, along with the edition of my poems you have done me the honour of editing. . . . It is gratifying to one whose aim as an author has been to reach the hearts of his fellow-creatures of all ranks and in all stations to find that he has succeeded in any quarter ; and still more must he be gratified to learn that he has pleased in a distant country men of simple habits and cultivated taste, who are at the same time widely acquainted with literature. Your second letter, accompanying the edition of the poems, I have read ; but, unluckily, have it not before me. It was lent to Serjeant Talfourd¹ on account of the passage in it that alludes to the possible and desirable establishment of English copyright in America. I shall now hasten to notice the edition which you have superintended of my poems. . . . I have only to regret, in respect to this volume, that it should have been published before my last edition, in the correction of which I took great pains, as my last labour in that way, and which moreover contains several additional pieces. It may be allowed me also to express a hope that such a law will be passed ere long by the American legislature as will place English authors in general upon

¹ Sir Thomas Noon Talfourd (1795-1854), jurist, dramatist, litterateur, member of Parliament, author of *Ion* and of *Life and Letters of Charles Lamb*, ardent advocate of international copyright. — Ed.

a better footing in America than at present they have obtained, and that the protection of copyright between the two countries will be reciprocal. The vast circulation of English works in America offers a temptation for hasty and incorrect printing ; and that same vast circulation would, without adding to the price of each copy of an English work in a degree that could be grudged or thought injurious by any purchaser, allow an American remuneration which might add considerably to the comforts of English authors who may be in narrow circumstances, yet who at the same time may have written solely from honourable motives. Besides, justice is the foundation on which both law and practice ought to rest. . . .

I cannot conclude, however, without assuring you that the acknowledgments which I receive from the vast continent of America are among the most grateful that reach me. What a vast field is there open to the English mind, acting through our noble language ! . . .

Believe me, gratefully,

Your much obliged friend,

WM. WORDSWORTH.

DCLXXVII

William Wordsworth to Edward Quillinan

BRINSOP COURT, Sept. 20, 1837.

My dear Mr. Quillinan,

We are heartily glad to learn from your letter, just received, that in all probability by this time you must have left the unhappy country in which you have been so long residing. I should not have been sorry if you had entered a little more into Peninsular politics, for what is

going on there is shocking to humanity, and one would be glad to see anything like an opening for the termination of these unnatural troubles. The position of the Miguelites, relative to the conflicting so-called liberal parties, is just what I apprehended, and expressed very lately to Mr. Robinson. . . . He came down with us to Hereford with a view to a short tour on the banks of the Wye, which has been prevented by an unexpected attack of my old complaint of inflammation in the eye ; and, in consequence of this, Dora will accompany me home, with a promise on her part of returning to London before the month of October is out. Our places are taken in to-morrow's coach for Liverpool, so that since we must be disappointed in not seeing you and Jemima here, we trust that you will come on to Rydal from Leeds. This very day Dora had read to me your poem again ; it convinces me, along with your other writings, that it is in your power to attain a permanent place among the poets of England. Your thoughts, feelings, knowledge, judgment in style, and skill in metre entitle you to it ; and if you have not succeeded in gaining it, the cause appears to me merely to lie in the subjects which you have chosen.

It is worthy of note how much of Gray's popularity is owing to the happiness with which his subject is selected in three instances, viz. his *Hymn to Adversity*, his *Ode on a Distant Prospect of Eton College*, and his *Elegy*. I ought, however, in justice to you, to add that one cause of your failure appears to have been in thinking too humbly of yourself, so that you have not reckoned it worth while to look sufficiently round you for the best subjects, or to employ as much time in reflecting, condensing, bringing out, and placing your thoughts and feeling in the best point of view as is necessary.

I will conclude this matter of poetry, and my part of the letter, with requesting that as an act of friendship, at your convenience, you would take the trouble—a considerable one, I own—of comparing the corrections in my last edition with the text in the preceding one. You know my principles of style better, I think, than any one else, and I should be glad to learn if anything strikes you as being altered for the worse. You will find the principal changes are in *The White Doe*, in which I had too little of the benefit of your help and judgment. There are several also in the sonnets, both miscellaneous and political. In the other poems they are not at all so numerous; but here also I should be glad if you would take the like trouble. Jemima, I am sure, will be pleased to assist you in the comparison by reading new or old, as you may think fit. With love to her, I remain, my dear Mr. Quillinan,

Faithfully yours,

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH.

DCLXXVIII

Dorothy Wordsworth to Correspondent Unknown

RYDAL MOUNT, Sunday, October 8th, 1837.

My dear Cousin Edward,

A madman might as well attempt to relate the history of his own doings, and those of his fellows in confinement, as I to tell you one hundredth part of what I have felt, suffered, and done.

Through God's mercy I am now calm and easy.

I have not seen Charles Lamb's book. His sister still survives — a solitary twig — patiently enduring the storm of life. In losing her brother she lost her all — all but the remembrance of him, which cheers her the day through.

May God bless you.

Yours ever truly,

DOROTHY WORDSWORTH.

DCLXXIX

William Wordsworth to Lord Lonsdale

[1837.]

. . . After having had excellent health during my long ramble,¹ it is unfortunate that I should thus be disabled at the conclusion. The mischief came to me in Herefordshire, whither I had gone on my way home to see my brother-in-law, who, by his horse falling on him some time ago, was left without the use of his limbs.

I was lately a few days with Mr. Rogers, at Broadstairs, and also with the Archbishop of Canterbury, at Addington Park ; they were both well, and I was happy to see the Archbishop much stronger than his slender and almost feeble appearance would lead one to expect. We walked up and down in the park for three hours one day, and nearly four the next, without his seeming to be the least fatigued. I mention this, as we must all feel the value of his life in this state of public affairs.

The cholera prevented us getting as far as Naples, which was the only disappointment we met with. As a man of

¹ In Herefordshire. — Ed.

letters I have to regret that this most interesting tour was not made by me earlier in life, as I might then have turned the notices it has supplied me with to more account than I now expect to do. With respectful remembrances to Lady Lonsdale, and to your Lordship, in which Mrs. Wordsworth unites, I remain, my dear Lord,

Faithfully, your much obliged servant,

WM. WORDSWORTH.

DCLXXX

William Wordsworth to Henry Crabb Robinson

Dec. 15, [1837.]

My dear Friend,

To take the points of your letter in order. Serjeant Talfourd did forward me a petition, and I objected to sign it, not because I was misinformed, but because allegations were made in it of the truth of which I knew nothing of my own knowledge; and because I thought it impolitic to speak of the American publishers, who had done what there was no law to prevent their doing, in such harsh and injurious terms. This I thought would exasperate them, and put some of them upon opposing a measure, who might otherwise have felt no objection to it.

Soon after this I had the pleasure of seeing a very intelligent American gentleman at Rydal, whom you perhaps have seen, Mr. Duar, to whom I told my reasons for not signing the petition. He approved of them and said that the proper way of proceeding would have been to lay the case before our Foreign Secretary, whose duty it would be to open a communication with the American Foreign Secretary, and through that channel

the correspondence would regularly proceed to Congress. I am, however, glad to hear that the petition was received as you report. When I was last in London I breakfasted at Miss Rogers's with the American minister, Mr. Stephenson, who reprobated, in the strongest terms of indignation, the injustice of the present system. Both gentlemen spoke also of its impolicy in respect to America, as it prevented publishers, through fear of immediate underselling, from reprinting valuable English works.

You may be sure that a reciprocity in this case is by me much desired, though far less on my own account — for I cannot encourage a hope that my family will be much benefited by it — than from a love of justice, and the pleasure it would give me to know that the families of successful men of letters might take such a station as proprietors as those who are amused or benefited by their writings in both continents seem ready to allow them. I hope you will use your influence among your parliamentary friends to procure support for the serjeant's motion. I ought to have added that Spring Rice was so obliging as to write to me upon the subject of the American copyright, which letter I answered at some length; and if I am not mistaken that correspondence was forwarded by me to Serjeant Talfourd.

. . . I am uneasy in being so long in Barron Field's debt, he having favoured me with another letter of criticism upon my last edition. Some of the remarks will be useful, but in others I differ from him *toto caelo*. As probably you will have to write to him again, pray thank him for his kindness. I am not able to pen more than a few lines at a time without injury. . . . Then there are those abominable albums and autographs, with which I am cruelly pestered. . . .

Poor dear Kenyon! but I had foretold in my own thoughts, and said also to Mrs. Wordsworth, that I feared it would not be long before he would have some dangerous seizure. He is a generous and noble creature, and one for whom I have the highest respect. . . .

I have become rather indisposed to publish my sister's "Tour in Scotland" at present. I have no good reason for thinking that the taking it through the press would be a profitable stirring of her mind at all, and the hope of this result was my only inducement to undertake the experiment. Besides, we both feel there would be some indelicacy in drawing public attention to her in her present melancholy state. Before I was forced to take this view of the case it had given me much pleasure, and I had corrected and enlarged two little poems upon the subject of Burns, which would have seen the light for the first time in this publication. . . .

Cannot you, either during the winter or the spring, run down and give us a month of your company, which we so much value? It took Dora only twelve hours to go from Kendal to Birmingham. The journey from Warrington is by railway, and from Kendal to Warrington by mail. We can meet you at Kendal, and you need not stop there; so that from Birmingham to us would take no more than fourteen or fifteen hours' time. . . .

With affectionate remembrances from us all to yourself, believe me,

Ever faithfully yours,

WM. WORDSWORTH.

DCLXXXI

William Wordsworth to W. Rowan Hamilton

RYDAL MOUNT, December 21, 1837.

The papers had informed me of the honour lately conferred upon you, and I was intending to congratulate you on the occasion, when your letter arrived. The electors have done great credit to themselves by appointing you, and not a little by rejecting the ultra-liberal Archbishop, and that by so decided a majority. We are much pleased that your sister, who, we conclude, is well, has sent her poems to press, and wish they may obtain the attention we are sure they will merit. Your own two sonnets, for which I thank you, we read, that is Mrs. Wordsworth and myself (Dora is in the South), with interest.

But to the main purport of your letter. You pay me an undeserved compliment in requesting my opinion how you could best promote some of the benefits which the Society at whose head you are placed aims at. As to patronage, you are right in supposing that I hold it in little esteem for helping genius forward in the fine arts, especially those whose medium is words. Sculpture and painting *may* be helped by it, but even in these departments there is much to be dreaded. The French have established an Academy at Rome upon an extensive scale, and so far from doing good, I was told by every one that it had done much harm. The plan is this: they select the most distinguished students from the School, or Academy, at Paris, and send them to Rome with handsome stipends, by which they are tempted into idleness and of course into vice; so that it looks like a contrivance for

preventing the French nation, and the world at large, from profiting by the genius which nature may have bestowed, and which, left to itself, would in most cases, perhaps, have prospered. The principal, I was indeed told the *only*, condition imposed upon these students is that each of them send annually some work of his hands to Paris. When at Rome I saw a good deal of English artists; they seemed to be living happily and doing well, though, as you are aware, the public patronage any of them receive is trifling.

Genius in poetry, or any department of what is called the *Belles-Lettres*, is much more likely to be cramped than fostered by public support; better wait to reward those who have done their work, though even here national rewards are not necessary, unless the labourers be, if not in poverty, at least in narrow circumstances; let the laws be but just to them, and they will be sure of attaining a competence, if they have not misjudged their own talents, or misapplied them. The cases of Chatterton, Burns, and others might, it would seem, be urged against the conclusion that help beforehand is not required; but I do think that in the temperament of the two I have mentioned there was something which, however favourable had been their circumstances, however much they had been encouraged and supported, would have brought on their ruin. As to what patronage can do in Science, discoveries in Physics, mechanic arts, etc., you know far better than I can pretend to do.

As to "better canons of criticism, and general improvement of scholars," I really — speaking without affectation — am so little of a critic or scholar that it would be presumptuous in me to write upon the subject to you. If we were together, and you should honour me by asking

my opinion upon particular points, that would be a very different thing, and I might have something to say not wholly without value. But where could I begin with so comprehensive an argument, and how could I put, within the compass of a letter, my thoughts, such as they may be, into anything like order? It is somewhat mortifying to me to disappoint you. You must upon reflection, I trust, perceive that in attempting to comply with your wish I should only lose myself in a wilderness. I have been applied to, to give lectures upon Poetry in a public institution in London, but I was conscious that I was neither competent to the office, nor the public prepared to receive what I should have felt it my duty to say, however imperfectly. . . .

DCLXXXII

Mary Wordsworth to Mrs. Marshall

[1837.]

. . . You will receive from Moxon a copy of unpublished verses, which Mr. Wordsworth has desired to be sent to Grosvenor Street. They were composed in consequence of Miss Lamb having expressed a wish that Mr. Wordsworth should write her brother's epitaph. Not exactly feeling himself competent to do this — from peculiar circumstances — he shrank from the task at first, till it occurred to him that he might take the subject up after the manner of Chiabrera's epitaphs, which he himself translated. And he did so, but finding the matter could not be compressed within reasonable space, and not having adverted to the most prominent feature in his friend's epitaphs, he left what he had attempted with that view,

and proceeded as you will see, giving up the idea of his lines being used as an epitaph, but to be published — along with extracts from Lamb's letters, together with something of a memoir, I believe — as a memorial of his friend. Moxon has struck off a few copies, one of which you will receive.

. . . We have not seen Mr. W.'s¹ medallion of my husband. We were much pleased with Southey's. . . .

DCLXXXIII

William Wordsworth to Alexander Dyce

Dec. 23, 1837.

My dear Sir,

I have just received your valuable present of Bentley's works, for which accept my cordial thanks, as also for the leaf to be added to Akenside.

Is it recorded in your memoir of Akenside — for I have not leisure nor eyesight at present to look — that he was fond of sitting in St. James's Park with his eyes upon Westminster Abbey? This, I am sure, I have either read or heard of him; and I imagine that it was from Mr. Rogers. I am not unfrequently a visitor on Hampstead Heath, and seldom pass by the entrance of Mr. Dyson's villa on Goulder's Hill, close by, without thinking of the pleasure which Akenside often had there.

I cannot call to mind a reason why you should not think some passages in *The Power of Sound* equal to anything I have produced. When first printed in *Yarrow Revisited*, I placed it at the end of the volume; and, in

¹ Mr. Wyon. — Ed.

the last edition of my poems, at the close of the "Poems of Imagination," indicating thereby my own opinion of it.

How much do I regret that I have neither learning nor eyesight thoroughly to enjoy Bentley's masterly *Dissertation on the Epistles of Phalaris*!¹ Many years ago I read the work with infinite pleasure. As far as I know, or rather am able to judge, it is without a rival in that department of literature, — a work of which the English nation may be proud as long as acute intellect, and vigorous powers, and profound scholarship shall be esteemed in the world.

Let me again repeat my regret that in passing to and from Scotland you have never found it convenient to visit this part of the country. I would be delighted to see you, and I am sure Mr. Southey would be also. In his house you would find an inexhaustible collection of books, many of them curious no doubt; but his classical library is much the least valuable part of it. The death of his excellent wife was a deliverance for herself and the whole family, so great had been her sufferings of mind and body.

You do not say a word about Skelton,² and I regret much your disappointment in respect to Middleton.³

I remain, my dear sir,

Faithfully, your much obliged

WM. WORDSWORTH.

¹ Richard Bentley (1662-1742). His *Dissertation on the Epistles of Phalaris, and the Fables of Æsop* was published in 1698. — Ed.

² Dyce edited Skelton's *Works* in two volumes in 1843. — Ed.

³ He edited the *Works* of Middleton in five volumes in 1840. — Ed.

1838

DCLXXXIV

William Wordsworth to William Rowan Hamilton

RYDAL MOUNT, Jan. 4, 1838.

My dear Sir William,

From a hope of something starting up in my mind which might prevent my letter from being an utter disappointment I have not answered yours, as I wished to do, by return of post. But I am really still as much at a loss how to make my letter worth reading as if I had replied immediately. Allow me, however, to thank you for your last, which has completely done away with the vagueness of the former. I now distinctly understand you; and as 'to one of your leading points, viz. availing myself of publication through your Society, I may say that, if there had been among my papers anything of the kind you wish for, I should have gladly forwarded it to you. But it is not so, nor dare I undertake to promise anything of the kind for the future.

Although prevailed upon by Mr. Coleridge to write the first *Preface* to my poems—which tempted, or rather forced, me to add a *Supplement* to it—and induced by my friendship for him to write the *Essay upon Epitaphs*, now appended to *The Excursion*, but first composed for *The Friend*, I have never felt inclined to write criticism, though I have talked, and am daily talking, a great deal.

If I were several years younger I would, out of friendship to you mainly, sit down to the task of giving a body

to my notions upon the essentials of Poetry, a subject which could not be properly treated without adverting to the other branches of Fine Art. But at present, with so much before me that I could wish to do in verse, and the melancholy fact — brought daily more and more home to my conviction — that intellectual labour, by its action on the brain and nervous system, is injurious to the bodily powers (and especially to my eyesight), I should only be deceiving myself and misleading you, were I to encourage a hope that much as I could wish to be your fellow-labourer — however humbly — I shall ever become one.

Having disposed of this rather painful part of the subject of your letter let me say — that though it is principally matters of science in which publication through your Society would be serviceable, and indeed in that department eminently so, I concur with you in thinking that the same vehicle would be useful for bringing under the notice of the thinking part of the community critical essays of too abstract a character to be fit for popularity. There are obviously, even in criticism, two ways of affecting the minds of men: the one by treating the matter so as to carry it immediately to the sympathies of the many, and the other by aiming at a few select and superior minds, that might each become a centre for illustrating it in a popular way. Mr. Coleridge, whom you allude to, acted upon the world to a great extent through the latter of these processes; and there cannot be a doubt that your Society might serve the cause of just thinking and pure taste should you, as President of it, hold up to view the desirableness of first conveying to a few, through that channel, reflections upon Literature and Art which, if well meditated, would be sure of winning their way directly, or in their indirect results, to a gradually widening circle.

May I not encourage a hope that during the ensuing summer, or at the worst at no distant period, you and I might meet, when a few hours' conversation would effect more than could come out of a dozen letters dictated hastily, as I am obliged to dictate this, because of an unexpected interruption when Mrs. W. and I were sitting down, with the pen in her hand?

You are right in your recollection that I named to you the subject of foreign piracy as injurious to English authors, and I may add now that, if it could be put a stop to, I believe that it would rarely happen that successful writers — in works of imagination and feeling at least — would stand in need of pensions from Government, or would feel themselves justified in accepting them. Upon this subject I have spoken a great deal to members of Parliament of all parties, and with several distinguished Americans. I have also been in correspondence with the present Chancellor of the Exchequer upon it, and dwelt upon the same topic in a letter which I had occasion to write to Sir Robert Peel. Mr. Lytton Bulwer, as perhaps you know, drew the attention of Parliament to it during the last session; and Lord Palmerston said, in answer to him, that the attention of Government had already been directed to the measure, and that it would not be lost sight of, or something to that purpose.

I may claim some credit for my exertions in this business, and full as much, or more, for the pains which I have taken for many years to interest men in the House of Commons in the extension of the term of copyright, — a measure which I trust is about to be brought to a successful close by the exertions of my admirable friend Serjeant Talfourd. To him I have written upon the argument more than once. When this is effected, I trust the other

part of the subject will be taken up with spirit ; and if the Foreign Secretary, in whose department the matter lies, should be remiss, I trust he will be stimulated through Parliament, to which desirable end the services of distinguished societies like yours, and the notice of the question by men of letters, in reviews or otherwise, would greatly contribute. Now that reading is spread and is spreading so widely, very few good authors would be in need, except through their own fault, if justice were done to them by their own and foreign countries.

When I was in town last August, the American minister, Mr. Stephenson, spoke to me with much indignation of the law and practice by which copyright was secured in England for American authors, while there was no reciprocity for English writers in America. . . .

Did I ever mention to you that owing to the sea having swallowed up his¹ father-in-law's coal-pits, ——'s income is much reduced, and he therefore feels it necessary to endeavour to procure a couple of pupils who could afford to pay rather handsomely for the advantages they would have under his roof? By this time he would have succeeded, but parents in the South have an unaccountable objection to sending their sons so far North. As the same might not be felt in Ireland, I take the liberty of mentioning his wish to you, being persuaded that if you can you will assist him in his aims. If your address to your Society should be published, could you send it me, and acquaint me with what you have done?

Affectionately yours,

WM. WORDSWORTH.

¹ Probably his son John, who married a daughter of Mr. Curwen of Workington, is referred to. — Ed.

DCLXXXV

William Wordsworth to Correspondent Unknown

LIVERPOOL, Jan. 25, 1838.

. . . When in Herefordshire I passed a few days with Sir Uvedale Price, one of the late batch of baronets. He is in his eighty-first year, and as active in ranging about his woods as a setter dog. We talked much of Sir George Beaumont, to whom he was very strongly attached. He has just written a most ingenious work on ancient metres and the proper mode of reading Greek and Latin verse. If he is right we have all been wrong; and I think he is right. It is a strange subject to interest a man at his age, but he is all life and spirits. . . .

DCLXXXVI

William Wordsworth to Edward Moxon

February, 1838.

. . . A day or two ago Dr. Arnold showed me a letter from a clergyman, an accomplished scholar besides, entreating me to publish my works in "brown paper" — that was the word, meaning I suppose the cheapest form — for the benefit of readers in the humblest condition of life, being convinced from his own experience that my works were fitted to touch their hearts and purify and exalt their minds. These were not his words exactly, but they were to this effect. Miss Martineau, I am told, has said that my poems are in the hearts of the American people. That is the place I would fain occupy among the people of these

Islands, and I am not at all sure that the abstract character of a small portion of my own poetry would at all stand in the way of that result, though it would not of itself recommend them to the mass of the people. . . .

I leave the mode of publication entirely to your superior judgment, being persuaded that whatever there may be — in these or my other works — fitted for general sympathy will find its way, as education spreads, to the spirits of many. I ought to add, as a personal motive for preparing a volume printed as you recommend, that it will gratify my daughter, whom I am always happy and proud to please; and before you decide as to type and shape of page, would you take the trouble to communicate with her, and send a specimen to No. 3 Clarence Lane, Dover?

Very sincerely yours,

W. W.

DCLXXXVII

*William Wordsworth to John Wordsworth*¹

Saturday, Mar. 10th, [1838.]

My dear John,

. . . In compliance with your wish, and that of other friends, I am carrying through the press an edition of *all* my sonnets in a separate volume. . . . I was myself for making the edition not expensive by publishing two sonnets on a page; but Dora disliked this, and Mr. Moxon thought that we should have a better prospect of selling seven hundred and fifty at nine shillings than fifteen hundred at a considerably lower price, two sonnets on a

¹ His nephew, son of the Master of Trinity College, Cambridge.
— Ed.

page. . . . Four new sonnets will be added, which I have composed since the resolution of printing them in this shape was taken. The whole number will scarcely be less than four hundred and twenty.

. . . People compliment me upon my looks, but I feel myself a good deal older within the last two years. I think my Continental exertions, and perhaps the heat of the climate, were something too much for me; but what agrees with me worst of all is residence in London, late hours of dining, and talking from morning to night.

This morning brought me a letter from Lady Frederick Bentinck, containing the sad news of the death of my excellent friend, Lady Lonsdale. She was in her seventy-seventh year, but when I saw her last November she had little or no appearance of infirmity. I loved her with sincere affection. . . . She has been as kind to me as an elder sister. . . .

I have sent you a sonnet which I shall not print in my collection,¹ because my poems are wholly as I wish them to continue, without *personalities* of a vituperative character. If you think it worth being printed, pray have it copied and sent to the *Cantabridge Chronicle*, without a name. . . .

And now farewell.

Your affectionate uncle,

WM. WORDSWORTH.

¹ Doubtless his *Protest against the Ballots*, for which see the *Poetical Works*, Eversley edition, Vol. VIII, p. 304. — Ed.

DCLXXXVIII

William Wordsworth to William Ewart Gladstone

RYDAL, KENDAL, March 23, 1838.

My dear Mr. Gladstone,

Most probably I am putting you to unnecessary trouble by this letter, which is written solely to remind you that the second reading of Serjeant Talfourd's bill stands for Wednesday, April 11. In a letter received this morning Serjeant Talfourd tells me that the booksellers (rapacious creatures as they are) are getting up a very strong opposition to his motion, and will be supported by the doctrinaires (who are they? Warburton and Grote, and *id genus omne*, I suppose). Upon the general merits of this question it would be presumptuous in me to enter in a letter to you. But as to my own interest in it, it may not be superfluous to say that within the last three years or so my poetical writings have produced for me nearly £1500, and that much the greatest part of them either would be public property to-morrow, if I should die, or would become so in a very few years. Is this just, or can a state of law which allows the possibility of such injustice be favourable to the production of solid literature in any department of what is usually called *Belles-Lettres*?

Ever faithfully yours,

WM. WORDSWORTH.

I need not say how much I would rejoice to see you at Rydal Mount.

DCLXXXIX

William Wordsworth to Sir Robert Peel

RYDAL MOUNT, KENDAL, April 18th, 1838.

Dear Sir,

The consideration of your eminence as a statesman may, to a man of letters, be a sufficient apology for writing to you upon the subject of Serjeant Talfourd's copy-right bill; and I am further encouraged to take this step by remembrance of the interest you kindly expressed (some time ago) in a concern of mine, by letter to Lord Lonsdale; and also in what you did me the honour of writing to myself upon the same occasion.

Allow me then to state the fact that if the bill do not pass, or a comprehensive one grounded upon its principle, I shall be aggrieved in the most tender points; and in respect to almost every individual eminent in Literature whom I have intimately known, I can of themselves or their heirs affirm the same.

The *justice* of the principle of the bill must be too obvious to so comprehensive a mind as yours to allow of my saying a word upon the subject; but there can be no presumption in declaring my opinion that, as a remedial measure, it is urgently called for. The literary talent of the country is in a great measure wasted upon productions of light character and transitory interest, and upon periodicals. Surely the extension of copyright, as contemplated in this bill, could not but avail greatly in putting authors upon exertions of a nobler kind, and in justifying and encouraging them to proceed.

I have the honour to be, with the highest respect,

Faithfully, your obedient servant,

WM. WORDSWORTH.

DCXC

William Wordsworth to Sir Robert Peel

[1838?]

Dear Sir Robert,

I am unwilling to encroach so far upon the kind and flattering expressions of your letter and the assurance it gives me that you will maturely consider the important subject to which it relates ; but pray allow me to do this, and yet something more.

As you may not have seen or heard what Serjeant Talfourd said upon Patents, and such cases of copyright as his bill mainly looked to, I have taken the liberty of annexing part of the passage from *The Times*, that it may be read with less trouble.

“It remains to be proved that the protection granted to patentees is sufficient ; but supposing it to be so, although there are points of similarity between the cases, there are grounds of essential and obvious distinction. In cases of patent, the merits of the invention are palpable, the demand is usually immediate, and the recompense of the inventor, in proportion to the utility of his work, speedy and certain. In cases of patent, the subject is generally one to which many minds are at once applied ; the invention is often not more than a step in a series of processes, the first of which being given, the consequence will almost certainly present itself sooner or later to some of these inquirers ; and if it were not hit on this year by one, would probably be discovered the next by another ; but who will suggest that if Shakespeare had not written *Lear*, or Richardson *Clarissa*, other poets or novelists would have invented them ? In practical science every discovery is a step to something more perfect ; and to

give to the inventor of each a protracted monopoly would be to shut out all improvement by others. But who can improve or supersede (as is perpetually done in mechanical invention) these masterpieces of genius? They stand perfect, apart from all things else, self-sustained, the models for imitation, the source whence rules of art take their origin. And if we apply the analogy of mechanical invention to literature, we shall find that, in so far as it stands, there is really in the latter no monopoly at all, however brief. For example, historical or critical research bears a close analogy to the process of mechanical discovery, and how does the law of copyright apply to the treasures it may reveal? The fact discovered, the truth ascertained, become at once the property of mankind, to accept, to state, to reason on; and all that remains to the author is the style in which it is expressed."

Of the broad distinctions I may not, perhaps, be an impartial judge, as I have had the honour of hearing them adopted from suggestions of my own, and they appear to have made an impression upon the public. The conclusion of the extract meets in fact the difficulty stated by you of determining what constitutes an original work, as distinguished from plagiarism. Dr. Arnold is now engaged in writing a *History of Rome*, in which I know that he will be greatly indebted to Niebuhr, but I have no doubt of the subject being treated by him in such a manner that neither Niebuhr—had he been an Englishman, and written in English—would be found, were he alive, to complain, nor could any competent tribunal to which the case might be referred condemn the subsequent writer for having made an unfair or illegal use of his predecessor's labours. So would it always be with the successful labours of men of honour and great talent employed

upon the same subjects ; and it is only upon the productions of such authors that the proposed extension of term has any bearing. Mere drudges and dishonest writers are sometimes protected by the law as it now exists ; but their works, if not cried down at once, soon die of themselves, and the plundered author seldom thinks it worth while to complain, or seek a remedy by law. For these reasons — though suspecting my judgment when it differs from yours — I cannot see a formidable difficulty here ; nor can I agree with your opinion that the difficulty incident to any degree of protection increases with the protection of it. I incline to think that the contrary would be the fact.

As to piracy, much wrong is done by it ; but imperfect as protection must be in this case, is not that rather a reason for prolonging it at home, in order that there may be, in its duration, something of an equivalent for what is lost by foreign injustice ?

The feeling is strong, however, among leading men in America in favour of international copyright. So it is, I believe, in France ; and last year I was told in Paris, at Galignani's, that their trade of this kind was destroying itself by competition and underselling. But, if we cannot altogether succeed in this point, *est quodam prodire tenus* ; and let us hope and trust that justice, gratitude, and generous feelings will gain ground among nations, in spite of Utilitarians and Economists who would banish such qualities from our heads and hearts, as they have done from their own ; and to the discomfiture of overgrown publishers, who — to my knowledge — have instigated their misled dependents to oppose the measure.

Permit me to state a fact as throwing light upon the reasonableness of lengthening the term of copyright. My

own poems, and I may add Mr. Coleridge's, have been in demand since their first publication, but till lately only to that degree which confined both publisher and author, in common prudence, to small editions, the profits of which were accordingly small to the publisher, and the residue to the author almost insignificant. I have gained much more from my long-published writings within the last five or six years than in the thirty preceding, and the copyright of much the greatest portion of them would die with me, or within the space of four years. And if from small things we may ascend to great, how slowly did the poetry of Milton make its way to public favour; nor till very lately were the works of Shakespeare himself justly appreciated even within his own country.

Pardon me for writing at such length, and believe me, gratefully, and with the highest respect,

Your faithful servant,

WM. WORDSWORTH.

DCXCI

William Wordsworth to Edward Moxon

May, 1838.

. . . The extension of the term of copyright (whatever becomes of the principle during this session), being both just and expedient, is sure of being carried sooner or later. In the meanwhile, by being the single exception among publishers who have united to oppose it you have done yourself great honour, and acted to your advantage also, depend upon it. . . . Talfourd is an astonishing man for talents, genius, and energy of mind.

DCXCII

William Wordsworth to Daniel Stuart

May 17, 1838.

Dear Mr. Stuart,

In Mr. Gillman's *Life of Coleridge* just published I find these words: "The proprietor of *The Morning Post*, who was also the editor, engaged Coleridge to undertake the literary department. As contributors to this paper the editor had the assistance of Mr. Wordsworth, Mr. Southey, and Mr. Lamb; Mr. S., from his extreme activity, rapidity, and punctuality, which made him invaluable to the proprietor, etc. The others were not of the same value to the proprietor."

. . . For my own part, I am quite certain that nothing of mine ever appeared in *The Morning Post*, except a very few sonnets upon political subjects, and one poem called *The Farmer of Tilsbury Vale*; but whether this appeared in *The Morning Post* or *The Courier* I do not remember. In *The Courier* were printed two articles in continuation — amounting together to twenty-five pages — of the pamphlet I afterwards published on *The Convention of Cintra*. . . . Certain I am that the last thing that could have found its way into my thoughts would have been to enter into an engagement to write for any newspaper, and that I never did. In short, with the exception of the things already mentioned, a very few articles sent to a Westmorland journal during the first Westmorland contest, one article which I was induced to publish in a London newspaper when Southey and Byron were at war, a letter the other week to *The Kendal Mercury* upon the copyright question, and a letter to Serjeant Talfourd on the same subject, published in *The Morning Post*,

not a word of mine ever appeared, sent by myself at least, — or as far as I know by any other persons, — in any newspaper, review, magazine, or public journal whatsoever. By-the-bye, I ought to except two sonnets and a light poem — not connected with my works — which were printed in some provincial journal.

. . . I wish to write to Mr. Gillman, whose book, I am sorry to say, is full of all kinds of mistakes. Coleridge is a subject which no biographer ought to touch beyond what he himself was eyewitness to. . . . Believe me to remain,

Faithfully yours,

WM. WORDSWORTH.

DCXCIII

William Wordsworth to Correspondent Unknown

RYDAL MOUNT, June 9, [1838.]

My dear Sir,

Never had a book, a reprint especially, such a tedious and long journey through the press as my volume of sonnets. It is, however, on the point of being finished; and pray when you hear of its being advertised go, or send, to Moxon's, where I have directed a copy to be laid aside for you as a small return for your many attentions to me and mine.

Mr. Gillman's book¹ is not better than I feared I should find it. It is full of mistakes as to facts, and misrepresentations concerning facts. Poor dear Coleridge — from a hundred causes, many of them unhappy ones — was not

¹ His *Life of S. T. Coleridge*. — Ed.

to be trusted in his account either of particular occurrences or the general tenor of his engagements and occupations. Mr. Gillman may be more fortunate when he shall come to what he himself had an opportunity of observing, but there again I have my fears. Of idolatrous biography I think very lightly. We have had too many examples of it lately, — take Mr. Wilberforce's life by his sons as a specimen ; and Coleridge I am afraid will not be dealt with more wisely. Observe in what I have said above I do not mean to impeach poor Coleridge's veraciousness, far from it, but his credibility. He deceived himself in a hundred ways, relating things according to the humour of the moment, as his spirits went up or down, or as they furnished employment for his fancy or for his theories. . . .

The copyright bill goes on unpromisingly.

Ever, my dear sir, most faithfully yours,

WM. WORDSWORTH.

DCXCIV

William Wordsworth to William Ewart Gladstone

June, [1838.]

My dear Mr. Gladstone,

Your decision was most judicious, and I thank you sincerely and cordially both for your exertions on this occasion and through the whole business, and for your kind letter. The cause is at once so just, and the measure so expedient, that I have not a doubt of the principle being carried, provided those who understand the question (which they cannot do without being sensible of its

importance) support it with due zeal in and out of Parliament. If you can point out any way in which I can be useful, I should be happy to do my best. You are perhaps aware of the reasons why Sir R. Peel withholds his support; he was so obliging as to state them in a letter to me. Perhaps it would be as well, however, if I should briefly give them. His difficulties are three.

First, if we grant extension of right to authors, says he, how can it be withheld from applicants for patents? secondly, how can the originality of a work be defined so as to discriminate it from a plagiarism? and lastly, how can we prevent works being reprinted in countries over which we have no jurisdiction?

I answered these several objections as well as I could, and satisfactorily as I thought; but not, I fear, to Sir R.'s conviction. All these hesitations arise out of that want of due confidence in the principles of justice, which is the bane of all practised politicians.

Thanks for your animated stanzas from Manzoni. I have often heard of the ode, but it never fell in my way. You have puzzled me about a new sonnet of mine in the *Quarterly*, I presume the last number; what can it be? and how could it get there? I have lately written thirteen new ones, which will appear in the edition of the whole of my sonnets in one volume which Moxon is about to publish; but none of these were ever given by me to any writer in that review or any other.

DCXCV

William Wordsworth to Edward Moxon

July 28, 1838.

I have been wandering for more than a month in the counties of Durham and Northumberland and am now fixed at home for, I trust, a long time. . . . *The Examiner* drolly enough says that a sonnet on the ballot, his favourite hobby, damns the volume.

DCXCVI

William and Mary Wordsworth to John Kenyon

RYDAL, 17th Aug., 1838.

My dear Friend,

I have been so much pleased with the power and knowledge displayed in Miss Barrett's volume of poems which you were so kind as to send Mr. W. some time ago that I am desirous of seeing her translation of *Æschylus*. Would you send me a copy through Mr. Moxon, and tell me also where it is to be bought, as two of my acquaintances wish to purchase it?

We hear of you through that kindest of creatures, H. Robinson, but not a word about your coming down, as you had given us leave to hope you might have done, but on the contrary that you are going off with your brother. A thousand good wishes attend you both, and pray remember us to him most kindly.

Ever affectionately yours,

WILLIAM AND MARY WORDSWORTH.

DCXCVII

William Wordsworth to Edward Moxon

August 30, 1838.

. . . What a queer creature Lord John Russell is ! Only think of his coming out against the copyright bill at this late hour ! It is like all his other proceedings ; and you may tell Mr. Rogers, with my kindest remembrances, that I wish he would put a little sense into the head of his noble friend on this subject. . . .

DCXCVIII

William Wordsworth to Mrs. Thelwall

November 16, 1838.

Madam,

Circumstances were not favourable to much intercourse between your late husband and myself. I became acquainted with him during a visit which he made to Mr. Coleridge, who was then residing at Nether-Stowey. . . . Your impression is correct that I, in company with my sister and Mr. Coleridge, visited him at his pleasant abode on the banks of the Wye. Mr. Southey was not of the party, as you suppose.

After the year 1798 I do not recollect having had any intercourse with Mr. Thelwall till he called upon me at Grasmere on his way to Edinburgh, whither he was going to give lectures upon elocution. This must have been some time between 1801 and 1807, and I once called upon him in London. After that time I think I never saw him. . . .

Whether Mr. Thelwall wrote much poetry, or not, I am ignorant; but I possess a small printed volume of his, containing specimens of an epic poem and several miscellaneous pieces. . . . Mr. Coleridge and I were of opinion that the modulations of his blank verse were superior to those of most writers in that metre. . . .

With best wishes I remain, madam,

Sincerely yours,

WM. WORDSWORTH.

DCXCIX

William Wordsworth to Henry Crabb Robinson

December, 1838.

. . . Timid as I was, I undertook to write a few sonnets upon taking leave of Italy. These gave rise to some more, and the whole amount to nine, which I shall read to you when you come, as you kindly promised that you would do. If, however, you prefer it, the four upon Italy will be sent to you upon the one condition that you do not read them to *verse-writers*.

We are all, in spite of ourselves, a parcel of thieves. I had a droll instance of it this morning, for while Mary was writing down for me one of these sonnets, on coming to a certain line she cried out somewhat uncourteously, "That's a plagiarism." "From whom?" "From yourself" was the answer. I believe she is right, though she could not point out the passage; neither can I. . . .

Have you heard that a proposal was made to me from a committee in the University of Glasgow to consent to become a candidate for the Lord Rectorship on a late occasion, which I declined? I think you must be aware

that the University of Durham conferred upon me the degree of D.C.L. last summer; it was the first time that the honour had been received there by any one in person. (You will not scruple, therefore, when a difficult point of law occurs, to consult me.) These things are not worth adverting to, but as signs that imaginative Literature — notwithstanding the homage now paid to Science — is not wholly without esteem. . . .

DCC

William Wordsworth to Edward Moxon

RYDAL MOUNT, December 11, 1838.

. . . You mention Lago de Garda; I hope you went to the head of it. If not, you missed some of the most striking scenery to be found anywhere among the Alps. . . . As to the edition in one volume, I wait for your proposals. So little is gained by having the lines wider apart that I should choose the thirty-six sheets in preference to the forty, but on account of the overflowing lines I could myself have no pleasure in looking at either the one page or the other. In the American edition which you saw not a single ten-syllable verse overflows, whereas in the pages sent me as specimens there are nine in one, and eleven in the other; which both disfigures the book very much and occupies too much space. The enclosed paper gives the length and width of the American page, within the marginal line, being within a hair's breadth short. Could not the book be printed on paper sufficiently wide to allow of a ten-syllable verse being uniformly included in one line, as something very considerable would be saved in space? This would lessen

the cost which wider paper would require. I repeat that I have an insurmountable aversion to overflowing lines, except when they cannot be avoided. On this subject, however, as a mere suggestion for the printer, I would ask whether the overflowing word would not be better placed, as formerly, near the end of the verse it belongs to than so far the beginning of that line and of the next.

I am in hopes that my nephew, John Wordsworth¹ of Cambridge, will correct the proofs for me, but I grieve to say he has been very unwell, and may not be equal to the task. . . . He is the most accurate [man] that I know, and if a revise of each sheet could be sent to him, the edition would be immaculate. . . . What do you, as a publisher, say to an edition of the whole of my poems being now sold in America for 1 franc, 25 cents, or something less than 13 *d.* of our money? and in India, as I have just learned, a Calcutta edition is sold for six rupees; so that we are cut off from the Indian market unless international copyright touches that quarter.

DCCI

William Wordsworth to Dora Wordsworth

[1838.]

My dear Dora,

Read the following remodelling of the sonnet I addressed to S.² The personalities are omitted, a few lines only retained:

Oh, what a wreck! How changed in mien and speech!
Yet, though dread Powers that work in mystery, spin

¹ The son of the Master of Trinity, Cambridge. — Ed.

² Southey. — Ed.

Entanglings for her brain ; though shadows stretch
 O'er the chilled heart — reflect ! far, far within
 Hers is a holy Being, freed from sin :
 She is not what she seems, a forlorn wretch ;
 But delegated Spirits comfort fetch
 To her from heights that Reason may not win.

Only illumined by Heaven's pitying love,
 Love pitying innocence, not long to last,
 On them, in Her, our sins and sorrows past.

The sonnet, as first sent to you and S., may be kept, if thought worthy, as a private record. The meaning in the passage you object to is certainly not happily brought out ; if you think it better thus, alter it :

Over the sacred heart compassion's twin,
 The heart that once could feel for every wretch.

The thought in the sonnet as it now stands has ever been a consolation to me, almost as far back as I can remember, and hope that, thus expressed, it may prove so to others makes one wish to print it ; but your mother seems to think it would be applied at once to your dear aunt. I own I do not see the force of this objection ; but if you and Miss Fenwick and others should be of the same mind, it shall be suppressed. It is already sent to the press, but not as it now stands ; if you think it may be printed without impropriety, pray be so good as to superintend the revise which I shall order the printer to send you : this would save time, for I could not entrust the revise to the printer only.

The following is sent for your amusement ; it will go by Mr. Fleming to Cambridge for your cousin John,¹ to be

¹ Son of the Master of Trinity College. — Ed.

printed without my name, if he thinks it worth while,
in the —.

Said Secrecy to Cowardice and Fraud,
Falsehood and Treachery, in close council met
Deep underground in Pluto's cabinet :
“ The frost of England's pride will soon be thawed ;
Hooded the open brow that overawed
Our schemes : the faith and honour, never yet
By us with hope encountered, be upset.
For once I burst my bands, and cry ‘ Applaud ! ’ ”
Then whispered she, “ The Bill is carrying out ! ”
They heard, and starting up, the Brood of Night
Clapp'd hands, and shook with glee their matted locks ;
All Powers and Places that abhor the light
Joined in the transport, echoed back their shout,
Hurrah ! for Grote, hugging his Ballot-box !

1839

DCCII

William Wordsworth to William Rowan Hamilton

RYDAL MOUNT, January 20, 1839.

Your letters and the verses under Lord Northampton's covers were received towards the end of September. In the few words of prose annexed, you tell me you do not expect an answer "till it should be easy and pleasant to me to write"; you will not, I trust, deem that I have abused this friendly privilege when I tell you that I have been prevented from writing by a succession of indispositions, one of which disabled me from either reading or writing, such was the state of my eyes, for upwards of two months. Although I am still suffering from the effects of a severe cold, I cannot let slip the opportunity of sending you, by my friend and neighbour Mr. Graves, a few words to thank you for your poem on the *Elysian Fields*, and that¹ in which you have done me so much honour by the affectionate manner in which you speak of me. Be assured, my dear Sir William, that without the help of these interesting lines I should retain a most lively remembrance of our first meeting, and of the hours so pleasantly and profitably spent in your Society, both in Ireland and at Rydal.

My daughter avails herself of the same opportunity to write to your sister Eliza, of whom we all think with

¹ His *Recollections*. — Ed.

a thousand good wishes and a sincere affection; we know not what favour her volume of poems may have met with from the public, but we are convinced that they merit a degree of approbation far beyond what it is too probable they will receive, poetry being so little to the taste of these times. I am strongly persuaded that in my own case, should I have first appeared before the public at this late day, my endeavours would have attracted little attention; forty years have been required to give my name the station (such as it is) which it now occupies.

Alas for your unhappy country! I know not when I have been more affected by a public occurrence than when I read Lord Charleville's account of his interview with Lord Norbury, within so few hours of that nobleman's horrible assassination, and then to see that event followed by such a speech as O'Connell made upon the mode in which it had been treated by the Lord Lieutenant and Lord Charleville. How long is the reign of this monster over the British Islands to endure?

Your godson is still with us, his father and mother being in London. Yesterday he asked where Dublin was, and what it was. I was surprised how the word came upon his lips, or the place into his thoughts; but he solved the difficulty by letting us know immediately that his "godfather Hamilton lived there." The day before he had seen his godfather Southey for the first time, who had come for a few days on a visit to your co-sponsor, Miss Fenwick, who has taken a house at Ambleside for a year. Southey, you will be sorry to hear, did not seem in good spirits. His depression was owing, we think, to the rather alarming state of health in which his youngest daughter has been for some time. I wish I could have written you a more interesting letter, but I am

obliged to employ the pen of Mrs. Wordsworth, who herself is not quite so well as I could wish. Little William is at this moment leaning upon the table on which his grandmother writes ; upon being asked what we should say to you, his reply was — “ A kiss ! ” which he gave to be transmitted. With a thousand kind wishes to you and yours, in which my amanuensis cordially joins, I remain your affectionate friend. . . .

DCCIII

William Wordsworth to Robert Southey

AMBLESIDE, Feb. 18th, [1839.]

My dear Southey,

I had yesterday a letter from Serjeant Talfourd, acknowledging the receipt of a petition which at his desire I had prepared, and expressing his satisfaction with it. He tells me that Sir Robert Inglis holds one from Dr. Arnold, which he means to present. But as he does not say that he has either received or heard of one from you, I have some little fear that you may not have made up your mind to take that step. I write to beg that you will do so, from a strong conviction that if your name be not found in the list of petitioners the effect upon the measure will be very injurious. Excuse the anxiety which has put me upon troubling you in this way, which, however, I have had less scruple in doing, as we have, I know, been so long in sympathy upon this important subject ; in which, as a public man, you yourself led the way. You will have seen that the second reading stands first on the list for the 27th. . . .

Ever affectionately yours, .

WM. WORDSWORTH.

DCCIV

*William Wordsworth to Henry Reed*¹

RYDAL MOUNT, Feb. 22, 1839.

My dear Sir,

. . . Your letter of the 3d of January, accompanying your review of my poems, reached me about ten days ago. I sincerely thank you for both, but I had received and read the article before, the *New York Review* having been sent me from London by a friend to whom I have been obliged in the same way occasionally. In respect to one particular, both in your letter and critique, I can speak without diffidence or hesitation : I mean the affectionate tone in which you give vent to your feelings of admiration and gratitude.

Grant me thy love, I crave no other fee,

is the concluding line of a valedictory sonnet at the close of a volume (lately published by Mr. Moxon), consisting of my sonnets only. This sentiment is, I assure you, predominant in my mind and heart; and I know no test more to be relied upon than acknowledgments such as yours, provided the like have been received from persons of both sexes, of all ages, and who have lived in different latitudes, in widely different states of society, and in conditions little resembling each other. Beyond what I have now said I feel scrupulous in expressing the gratification with which I read your critique, being so

¹ Wordsworth had been informed of a review antagonistic to him in the *Dehli Gazette* and of an appreciative rejoinder. In acknowledging the receipt of a copy of the *New York Review*, containing a cordial notice of his poems by Henry Reed, he wrote the following letter. — Ed.

highly encomiastic as it is. All that I can say with confidence is that I endeavoured to do what much and long reflection on your part justifies you to your own mind in saying I have done. . . .

Affectionately yours,

WM. WORDSWORTH.

DCCV

William Wordsworth to John Kenyon

RYDAL MOUNT, February 26th, 1839.

My dear Mr. Kenyon,

. . . Mrs. Wordsworth begs me to thank you cordially for your lady-friend, Miss Barrett's ¹ poems, which you sent her some time ago. Miss Barrett appears to be a very interesting person, both for genius and attainments. . . .

Faithfully yours,

WM. WORDSWORTH.

DCCVI

William Wordsworth to Serjeant Talfourd

[No date. Postmark, BATH, April 11, 1839.]

My dear Serjeant Talfourd,

Your letter just received has mortified me, not a little, that you should have had so much trouble and made such a sacrifice, to meet so unworthy a House of Commons. The consideration of the heartlessness and injustice of that Assembly is what vexes me most in the whole business. I entirely approve of the publication you meditate.

¹ Elizabeth Barrett, afterwards Mrs. Browning. — Ed.

Only, by selecting two or three petitions you might offend some of those authors to whom the like distinction was not paid. I therefore submit whether it would be advisable to print any of them.

As a fact connected with my own case I will mention that, in the year 1805, I concluded a long poem upon the formation of my own mind, a small part of which you saw in manuscript, when I had the pleasure of a visit from you at Rydal. That book still exists in manuscript. Its publication has been prevented merely by the personal character of the subject. Had it been published as soon as it was finished, the copyright would long ago have expired in the case of my decease. Now I do honestly believe that that poem, if given to the world before twenty-eight years had elapsed after the composition, would scarcely have paid its own expenses. If published now, with the aid of such reputation as I have acquired, I have reason to believe that the profit from it would be respectable; and my heirs, even as the law now is, would benefit by the delay; but in the other case neither they nor I would have got a farthing from it, if my life had not been prolonged; the profit, such as it might be, would all have gone to printers and publishers, and would, of course, continue to do so. What could be more ——?

I wish my arrangements would allow me to be in Town before the bill comes on again. With best wishes I ever am

Much obliged, and affectionately yours,

W. WORDSWORTH.

DCCVII

William Wordsworth to Henry Taylor

RYDAL, Friday Morning, in haste for the Post, [1839.]

My dear Mr. Taylor,

Nothing but the importance of the subject can, I feel, justify me in troubling you again. The additional sonnet¹ sent the other day had only just been written. It is wrongly placed and would stand much better immediately after the third. I could wish it also to be altered thus towards the conclusion :

The strife
Of individual will, to elevate
The grovelling mind, the erring to recall,
And fortify . . .

Read in what could stand as the ninth² :

Fit retribution, by the moral code
Determined, lies beyond the State's embrace;
Yet, as she may, for each peculiar case
She plants . . .

I am strongly inclined to think that for many reasons it would be better to leave these sonnets untouched in your *Review*,³ but I leave the matter to your own judgment.

Ever faithfully yours,

WM. WORDSWORTH.

¹ The ninth "Upon the Punishment of Death." — Ed.

² It is the eighth sonnet in the series. — Ed.

³ Sir Henry Taylor published all the "Sonnets upon the Punishment of Death" in the *Quarterly Review* of December, 1841. — Ed.

DCCVIII

William Wordsworth to Henry Crabb Robinson

RYDAL MOUNT, 7th July, 1839.

. . . Relieve the people of the burden of their duties, and you will soon make them indifferent about their rights. There is no more certain way of preparing the people for slavery than this practice of central organization which our philosophists, with Lord Brougham at their head, are so bent upon importing from the Continent. I should have thought that, in matters of government, an Englishman had more to teach those nations than to learn from them. . . .

DCCIX

William Wordsworth to Henry Crabb Robinson

RYDAL MOUNT, [1839.]

. . . My mind never took pleasure in throwing itself out after that manner [viz., in letters]; and, to say the truth, I think that the importance of letters in modern times is much over-rated. If they be good and natural as letters, they will seldom be found interesting to solid minds, beyond the persons or the circle to which they are immediately addressed. I was struck the other day with an observation of the poet Gray upon Pope's *Epistles*. "As letters," says he, "they are not good, but they are something better than letters." How far this may be true in respect to Pope I do not know, for it is a long time since I read his letters; but the remark as of general application is far from being unimportant. . . .

DCCX

*William Wordsworth to John Peace*¹

RYDAL MOUNT, Aug. 30, 1839.

My dear Sir,

. . . It was not a little provoking that I had not the pleasure of shaking you by the hand at Oxford when you did me the honour of coming so far to "join in the shout."² I was told by a Fellow of University College that he never witnessed such an outburst of enthusiasm in that place, except upon the occasions of the visits of the Duke of Wellington, one of them being unexpected. My nephew, Fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge, was present, as well as my son William, who, I am happy to say, is much better in health than when you saw him in Oxford. He is here, and desires to be kindly remembered to you. . . .

DCCXI

William Wordsworth to Henry Reed

RYDAL MOUNT, Dec. 23, 1839.

My dear Sir,

The year is upon the point of expiring, and a letter of yours, dated May 7th, though not received till late in June (for I was moving about all last spring and part of the summer), remains unacknowledged. . . . Your letters naturally turn upon the impression which my poems have made, and the estimation in which they are held, or are likely to be held, through the vast country to which you belong. I wish I could feel as lively as you do upon

¹ The city librarian of Bristol. — Ed.

² Where he went in July, to receive the D.C.L. degree. — Ed.

the subject, or even upon the general destiny of those works. Pray do not be long surprised at this declaration.

There is a difference of more than the length of your life, I believe, between our ages. I am standing on the brink of that vast ocean I must sail so soon ; I must speedily lose sight of the shore ; and I could not once have conceived how little I am now troubled by the thought of how long or short a time they who remain on that shore may have sight of me.

The other day I chanced to be looking over a manuscript poem, belonging to the year 1803, though not actually composed till many years afterwards. It was suggested by visiting the neighbourhood of Dumfries, in which Burns had resided, and where he died. It concluded thus,

Sweet Mercy! to the gates of heaven
This minstrel lead, his sins forgiven ;
The rueful conflict, the heart riven
 With vain endeavour,
And memory of earth's bitter leaven,
 Effaced for ever.

Here the verses closed ; but I instantly added, the other day :

But why to him confine the prayer,
When kindred thoughts and yearnings bear
On the frail heart the purest share
 With all that live?
The best of what we do and are,
 Just God, forgive!

The more I reflect upon this last exclamation, the more I feel — and perhaps it may in some degree be the same with you — justified in attaching comparatively small importance to any literary monument that I may be enabled

to leave behind. I am convinced, however, that it is well men think otherwise in the earlier part of their lives ; and why it is so is a point I need not touch upon in writing to you. Before I dismiss this subject, let me thank you for the extract from your intelligent friend's letter ; and allow me to tell you that I could not but smile at your Boston critic placing my name by the side of Cowley. I suppose he cannot be such a simpleton as to mean anything more than that the same measure of reputation or fame, if that be not too presumptuous a word, is due to us both. . . .

I should be truly glad to see you in the delightful spot where I have long dwelt ; and I have more pleasure in saying this to you, because, in spite of my old infirmity, my strength exceeds that of most men of my years, and my general health continues to be, as it always has been, remarkably good. . . .

There is an opinion pretty current among discerning persons in England that republics are not to be trusted in money concerns. Is this because the sense of honour is morè obtuse, the responsibility being divided among so many ? For my own part, I have as little, or less, faith in absolute despotisms, except that they are more easily convinced that it is politic to keep up their credit by holding to their engagements. What power is maintained by this practice was shown by Great Britain in her struggle with Bonaparte. This lesson has not been lost on the leading monarchical states of Europe. . . . Believe me to remain,

Faithfully yours,

WM. WORDSWORTH.

1840

DCCXII

William Wordsworth to Lady Frederick Bentinck

RYDAL MOUNT, AMBLESIDE, Jan. 3, [1840.]

My dear Lady Frederick,

Yesterday brought us melancholy news in a letter from my brother Dr. Wordsworth, which announced the death of his eldest son. He died last Tuesday in Trinity College, of which he was a fellow, having been tenderly nursed by his father during rather a long illness. He was a most amiable man, and I have reason to believe was one of the best scholars in Europe. We were all strongly attached to him; and, as his poor father writes, "the loss is to me, and to my sorrowing sons, irreparable on this side of the grave. . . ."

W. W.

DCCXIII

William Wordsworth to Christopher Wordsworth

Friday, Jan. 3, [1840.]

My very dear Brother,

It is in times of trouble and affliction that one feels most deeply the strength of the ties of family and nature. We all most affectionately condole with you, and those who are around you, at this melancholy time. The departed was beloved in this house as he deserved to be; but our

sorrow, great as it is for our own sakes, is still heavier for yours and his brothers'. He is a power gone out of our family, and they will be perpetually reminded of it. But the best of all consolations will be with you, with them, with us, and all his numerous friends, that his life had been as blameless as man's could well be, and that, through the goodness of God, he is gone to his reward. . . . I remain,

Your loving brother,

WM. WORDSWORTH.

DCCXIV

William Wordsworth to Barron Field

RYDAL MOUNT, January 16, 1840.

My dear Mr. Field,

I have at last brought myself to write to you. After maturely considering the subject, however painful it may be to me, I must regret that I am decidedly against the publication of your Critical Memoir ; your wish is, I know, to serve me, and I am grateful for the strength of this feeling in your excellent heart. I am also truly proud of the pains of which you have thought my writings worthy ; but I am sure that your intention to benefit me in this way would not be fulfilled. The hostility which you combat so ably is in a great measure passed away, but might in some degree be revived by your recurrence to it, so that in this respect your work would, if published, be either superfluous or injurious, so far as concerns the main portion of it. I shall endeavour, during the short remainder of my life, to profit by it, both as an author and a man, in a private way ; but the notices of me by many others

which you have thought it worth while to insert are full of gross mistakes, both as to facts and opinions, and the sooner they are forgotten the better. Old as I am, I live in the hope of seeing you, and should in that event have no difficulty in reconciling you to the suppression of a great part of this work entirely, and of the whole of it in its present shape. . . . One last word in matter of authorship : it is far better not to admit people so much behind the scenes, as it has been lately fashionable to do. . . . Believe me to be,

Most faithfully, your much obliged

WM. WORDSWORTH.

DCCXV

William Wordsworth to Edward Moxon

RYDAL, 18th Jan., 1840.

My dear Mr. Moxon,

. . . Mr. W. has been a week with us taking sketches with a view to the illustration of my poems. . . . He has done pretty well. In particular, he has made a very good drawing in perspective of the interior of our dining and sitting rooms. It has a most picturesque appearance, and I cannot but think would be acceptable to those who take an interest in my writings. He has also done the outside of the house and the surrounding landscape.

I set my face entirely against the publication of Mr. Field's manuscripts. I ought to have written to him several weeks ago, but feeling as I did — being truly sensible of the interest he took in my character and writings, and grateful to him for having bestowed so much time upon the

subjects—I could not bring myself to tell him what I have with all frankness told to you. Mr. Field has been very little in England, I imagine, for above twenty years; and, consequently, is not aware that much the greater part of his labour would only answer the purpose of reviving forgotten things and exploded opinions. Besides, there are in his notions things that were personally *disagreeable*—not to use a harsher term—to myself and those about me; and if such an objection did not lie against the publication, it is enough that the thing is *superfluous*. In the present state of this country in general, how could this kind-natured friend then be deceived into the thought that criticism, and particulars so minute, could attract attention even from a few? . . .

Hartley¹ has positively asserted to my son and another gentleman that he considers his part of the work² at an end. True, he said, “I could go on for ever”; but sixty pages—twenty more than *Jonson*—are scarcely enough. I write this in consequence of your saying in your last: “The introduction to *Massinger* is still unfinished.” Perhaps all is right by this time.

Murray used to say that advertising always paid. So it might with him, but with old books like mine I should imagine that advertisements frequently repeated on the forthcoming of a new edition would not answer well; and therefore I am rather against it. I leave the decision to your friendly judgment.

Faithfully yours,

WM. WORDSWORTH.

¹ Hartley Coleridge. — Ed.

² This “work” was doubtless his *Life of Massinger*, which was Hartley Coleridge’s last work, and was published in 1839. — Ed.

DCCXVI

*William Wordsworth to Henry Alford*¹

[Postmark, AMBLESIDE, Feb. 21, 1840.]

My dear Sir,

. . . It cannot but be highly gratifying to me to learn that my writings are prized so highly by a poet and critic of your powers. The essay upon them which you have so kindly sent me seems well qualified to promote your views in writing it. I was particularly pleased with your distinction between religion in poetry and versified religion. For my own part, I have been averse to frequent mention of the mysteries of Christian faith; not from a want of a due sense of their momentous nature, but the contrary. I felt it far too deeply to venture on handling the subject as familiarly as many scruple not to do. I am far from blaming them, but let them not blame me, nor turn from my companionship on that account. Besides general reasons for diffidence in treating subjects of Holy Writ, I have some special ones. I might err in points of faith, and I should not deem my mistakes less to be deprecated because they were expressed in metre. Even Milton, in my humble judgment, has erred, and grievously; and what poet could hope to atone for misapprehensions in the way in which that mighty mind has done?

I am not at all desirous that any one should write an elaborate critique on my poems. There is no call for it. If they be from above, they will do their own work in course of time; if not, they will perish as they ought. But scarcely a week passes in which I do not receive

¹ Afterwards Dean of Canterbury. — Ed.

grateful acknowledgments of the good they have done to the minds of the several writers. They speak of the relief they have received from them under affliction and in grief; and of the calmness and elevation of spirit which the poems either give, or assist them in attaining. As these benefits are not without a traceable bearing upon the good of the immortal soul, the sooner, perhaps, they are pointed out and illustrated in a work like yours the better.

DCCXVII

William Wordsworth to Edward Moxon

February 24, 1840.

My dear Mr. Moxon,

Not being able to meet with H. C.¹ immediately on receipt of your letter, I wrote him a note a couple of days after and told him its contents. I have since seen him, and done all I could. And now let me give you, in respect to him, a piece of advice, once for all, viz., that you *never* engage with him for any *unperformed* work, when either time or quantity is of importance. Poor fellow! he has no resolve; in fact, nothing that can be called rational will or command of himself as to what he will do or not do; of course, I mean, setting aside the fundamental obligations of morality. Yesterday I learned that he had disappeared from his lodgings, and that he had been seen at eight o'clock entering the town of Kendal. He was at Ambleside the night before at eleven o'clock, so he must have been out the greater part of the night. I have lately begun to think that he has given

¹ Hartley Coleridge. — Ed.

himself up to his own notions, fancies, reveries, abstractions, etc. I admire his genius and talents far more than I can find words to express, especially for writing prose, which I am inclined to think (as far as I have seen) is more masterly than his verse. The workmanship of the latter seems to me not unfrequently too hasty, has indeed too much the air of an Italian's *improvisatore* production.

My friend, Mr. Powell, has some thought of preparing for publication some portions of *Chaucer Modernised*, so far as, and no further than, is done in my treatment of *The Prioress's Tale*. That would, in fact, be his model. He will have coadjutors; among whom, I believe, will be Mr. Leigh Hunt, a man as capable as any living writer of doing the work well. In addition to *The Prioress's Tale* I have placed at my friend's disposal three other pieces, which I wrote long ago, but revised the other day. They are *The Manciple's Tale*, *The Cuckoo and the Nightingale*, and twenty-four stanzas of *Troilus and Cressida*.

This I have done mainly out of my great love and reverence for Chaucer, in hope that, whatever may be the merits of Mr. Powell's attempt, the attention of other writers may be drawn to the subject; and a work hereafter be produced by different persons which will place the treasures of one of the greatest of poets within the reach of the multitude, which they now are not. I mention all this to you because—though I have not given Mr. Powell the least encouragement to do so—he may sound you as to your disposition to undertake the publication. I have myself nothing more to do with it than what I have stated. Had the thing been suggested to me by any number of competent persons twenty years ago, I would have undertaken the editorship, done much more myself, and endeavoured to improve the several

contributions where they seemed to require it. But that is now out of the question.

I am glad to hear so favourable an account of the sale of this new edition. The penny postage has let in an inundation of complimentary letters upon me. Yesterday I had one that would amuse you by the language of awe, veneration, and gratitude, etc., in which it abounds; and two or three days ago I had one from a little boy of eight years old. . . .

In several of these letters there is one thing which gratified me, viz., the frequent mention of the consolation which my poems have afforded the writers under affliction, and the calmness and elevation of mind which they have produced.

My paper is quite full. I hope you will see my dear daughter from time to time. To-morrow she goes to 10 Chester Place, to her friends the Coleridges.

I am not inclined to go to London this spring. Visiting, talking, late dinners, etc., are too hard work for me.

DCCXVIII

William Wordsworth to Lord Morpeth

March 2, 1840.

. . . I never did seek or accept a pension from the present or any other administration, directly or indirectly. . . .

DCCXIX

William Wordsworth to Benjamin Robert Haydon

RYDAL MOUNT, AMBLESIDE, March 12th, 1840.

My dear Haydon,

Though I have nothing to say but merely words of congratulation, hearty congratulation, I cannot forbear to thank you for your letter. You write in high spirits, and I am glad of it. It is only fair that, having had so many difficulties to encounter, you should have a large share of triumph. Nevertheless, though I partake most cordially of your pleasure, I should have been still more delighted to learn that your pencil (for that, after all, is the tool you were made for) met with the encouragement it so well deserves.

I should have liked to have been among your auditors, particularly so, as I have seen, not long ago, so many first-rate pictures on the Continent, and to have heard you at Oxford would have added largely to my gratification. I love and honour that place for abundant reasons, nor can I ever forget the distinction bestowed upon myself last summer by that noble-minded University.

Allow me to mention one thing on which, if I were qualified to lecture upon your art, I would dwell with more attention than, so far as I know, has been bestowed upon it. I mean perfection in each kind as far as it is attainable. This in widely different ways has been shown by the Italians, the Flemings, the Dutch, the Spaniards, the Germans, and why should I exclude the English?

Now, as a masterly, a first-rate ode, or elegy, or piece of humour even is better than a poorly or feebly executed

epic poem, so is a picture, though in point of subject the humblest that ever came from an easel, better than a work after Michael Angelo or Raffael, in choice of subject, or aim of style, if moderately performed. All styles, down to the humblest, are good, if there be thrown into the choosing all that the subject is capable of, and this truth applies not only to painting, but in degree to every other line of art. Now it is well worth a lecturer's while, if he sees the matter in this light, first to point out what stands highest through the whole scale of Art, and then to show what constitutes the appropriate perfection of all, down to the lowest. Now, my dear Haydon,

Faithfully yours,

W. WORDSWORTH.

DCCXX

William Wordsworth to Henry Crabb Robinson

March 16th, 1840.

Poor dear Miss Mackenzie! I was sadly grieved with the unthought-of event; and I assure you, my dear friend, it will be lamented by me for the remainder of my days. I have scarcely ever known a person for whom, after so limited an acquaintance — limited, I mean, as to time, for it was not so as to heart and mind — I felt so much esteem, or to whom I have been more sincerely attached. I had scarcely a pleasant remembrance connected with Rome in which her amiable qualities were not mixed, and now a shade is cast over all. I had hoped, too, to see her here, and that Mrs. Wordsworth, Dora, and Miss Fenwick would all have taken to her as you and I did.

How comes it that you write to us so seldom, now that postage is nothing? Letters are sure to be impoverished by the change; and if they do not come oftener, the gain will be a loss, and a grievous one too. . . .

DCCXXI

William Wordsworth to Edward Moxon

RYDAL MOUNT, March 27, 1840.

My dear Mr. Moxon,

The sonnets upon Capital Punishment which I send you (of which I sent you no more, I believe, than four) are now eleven. I should not be sorry to put them into circulation, on account of the importance of the subject, if I knew how. I cannot print them in a magazine for reasons you are aware of. . . .

Ever yours,

W. WORDSWORTH.

DCCXXII

*William Wordsworth to Dora Wordsworth
and Isabella Fenwick*

My dearest Dora,

7th April, 1840.

Though my left eye has been rather troublesome these two or three last days, I cannot forbear writing to you (and let the letter serve for dear Miss Fenwick also) upon the morning of my seventieth birthday.

I am, thank Almighty God! in excellent health, and so is your dear mother, and though some of my thoughts upon this occasion are naturally serious, even to sadness, I am, upon the whole, in a cheerful state of mind.

The day is bright as sunshine can make it, and the air fraught with as much stir and animating noise as the wind can put into it.

Your mother finds her ankles weak from the shock and sprain of her fall and consequent confinement, or I should have tempted her out with me to walk on the terrace, from which I have had an entertaining view, with help from Arthur Jackson and his brother, of the merriment of the servants shaking the glittering dust out of the carpets.

Sister is very comfortable, and we are going on nicely, though wishing much for your return. Yesterday I dined with Mrs. Luff, after calling at the house high up Loughrigg side where dwells the good woman who lost her two children in the flood last winter.

The wind was high when I knocked at her door, and I heard a voice from within that I knew not what to make of, though it sounded something like the lullaby of a mother to her baby. After entering I found it came from a little sister of those drowned children, who was singing to a bunch of clouts which she held in her arms, rudely put together to look like a doll.

I tell you this little story in order that, if it be perfectly convenient — but on no account else — you may purchase what may answer the purpose with something more of pride, and pleasure, to this youngling of a nurse. Such is your mother's wish. I should not have had the wit to think of it. No matter, she says, how common a sort of thing the doll is, only let it be a good big one.

Dear Miss Fenwick,

Mrs. Luff does not wish to part with her sofas, but they are quite at your service, and she would be pleased if you would use them till she has a house of her own. But that

time is, she fears, distant. Her American property is so unpromising that she has scruples about taking Old Brathay. Now, should she decline it, might it not, as the owner is willing to make some improvement, accommodate you for a time? I don't much like the thought; but, as a *pis aller*, it might possibly do until Mr. Hill may be tempted to give up his cottage.

I find, from a talk with Mrs. Fleming, that they are disposed to make improvements, could they let it for a term; and a term, with liberty of course to underlet, is what you want. But all this we long to talk over with you, among a thousand reasons for wishing you back again.

It had escaped my recollection when we heard about the woods and forests, and the Villiers' kindness, that I talked this matter over with Lord Lowther, when he was surveyor of that department, and he told me there was scarcely a single office under him that was an object, at least *then* a come-at-able one.

Were he in England now I should be inclined to ask him if my recollection be correct. But I must leave, which I do, dearest friends, with love to you both, and wishes for many happy returns of your own birthdays.

Ever most affectionately yours,

WM. WORDSWORTH.

P.S. — Mrs. Pedder is putting up a new staircase in some part of the house for the convenience of her new tenant. Dearest Dora, your mother tells me she shrinks from copies being spread of those sonnets¹; she does not wish one, on any account, to be given to Miss Gillies, for

¹ The two sonnets on Mrs. Wordsworth's portrait, painted by Miss Gillies. See the *Poetical Works*, Vol. VIII, pp. 114-115. — Ed.

that, without blame to Miss G., would be like advertising them. I assure you her modesty and humblemindedness were so much shocked that I doubt if she had more pleasure than pain from these compositions, though I never poured out anything more truly from the heart.

DCCXXIII

*William Wordsworth to Benjamin Dockray*¹

RYDAL MOUNT, April 25, [1840.]

My dear Sir,

Your *Egeria*² arrived on the morning when I was setting off to visit my son, with whom I stayed nearly three weeks. This must be my apology for not thanking you for the valuable present somewhat earlier. The strain of your thoughts is, I think, excellent, and the expression everywhere suitable to the thought. I have to thank you also for a most valuable paper on Colonial Slavery. In your view of this important subject I entirely coincide. Fanaticism is the disease of these times as much or more than of any other; fanaticism is set, as it has always been, whether moral, religious, or political, upon attainment of its ends with disregard of the means. In this question there are *three* parties,—the slave, the slave-owner, and the British people. As to the first, it might be submitted to the consideration of the owner whether, in the present state of society, he can, as a matter of private conscience, retain his property in the slave, after he is convinced that it would be for the slave's benefit, civil, moral, and religious, that he should be emancipated.

¹ Of Lancaster. — Ed.

² *Egeria* was published in 1840, which gives (approximately) the date of this letter. — Ed.

Whatever pecuniary loss might, under these circumstances, attend emancipation, it seems that a slave-owner, taking a right view of the case, ought to be prepared to undergo it. It is probable, however, that one of the best assurances which could be given of the slave being likely to make a good use of his liberty would be found in his ability and disposition to make a recompense for the sacrifice should the master, from the state of his affairs, feel himself justified in accepting a recompense. But by no means does it follow, from this view of individual cases, that the *third* party, the people of England, who through their legislature have sanctioned and even encouraged slavery, have a right to interfere for its destruction by a sweeping measure, of which an equivalent to the owner makes no part. This course appears to me unfeeling and unjust. . . .

What language, in the first place, would it hold out to the slave? That the property in him had been held by unqualified usurpation and injustice on the part of his master alone. This would be as much as to say, "We have delivered him over to you; and as no other party was to blame, deal with your late oppressors as you like." Surely such a proceeding would also be a wanton outrage upon the feelings of the masters, and poverty, distress, and disorder could not but ensue.

They who are most active in promoting entire and immediate Abolition do not seem sufficiently to have considered that slavery is not in itself at all times and under all circumstances to be deplored. In many states of society it has been a check upon worse evils; so much inhumanity has prevailed among men that the best way of protecting the weak from the powerful has often been found in what seems at first sight a monstrous

arrangement; viz., in one man having a property in many of his fellows. Some time ago many persons were anxious to have a bill brought into Parliament to protect inferior animals from the cruelty of their masters. It has always appeared to me that such a law would not have the effect intended, but would increase the evil. The best surety for an uneducated man behaving with care and kindness to his beast lies in the sense of the uncontrolled property which he possesses in him. Hence a livelier interest, and a more efficient responsibility to his own conscience, than could exist were he made accountable for his conduct to law. I mention this simply by way of illustration, for no man can deplore more than I do a state of slavery in itself. I do not only deplore but I *abhor* it, if it could be got rid of without the introduction of something worse, which I much fear would not be the case with respect to the West Indies, if the question be dealt with in the way many excellent men are so eagerly set upon. I am, dear sir,

Very sincerely, your obliged

WM. WORDSWORTH.

DCCXXIV

*William Wordsworth to Charles Henry Parry*¹

RYDAL MOUNT, AMBLESIDE, May 21, 1840.

My dear Sir,

Pray impute to anything but a want of due sympathy with you in your affliction my not having earlier given an answer to your letter. In truth, I was so much moved

¹ Charles Henry Parry, M.D. (1774-1842), Edinburgh, physician at Bath, wrote *The Nature, Cause, and Varieties of the Arterial Pulse* (1816). — Ed.

by it that I had not, at first, sufficient resolution to bring my thoughts so very close to your trouble as must have been done had I taken up the pen immediately. I have been myself distressed in the same way, though my two children were taken from me at an earlier age, one in her fifth, the other in his seventh year, and within half a year of each other. I can therefore enter into your sorrows more feelingly than for others is possible, who have not suffered like losses.

Your departed daughter¹ struck me as having one of the most intelligent and impressive countenances I ever looked upon, and I spoke of her as having such to Mrs. Wordsworth, Miss Fenwick, and others. The indications which I saw in her of an alarming state of health I could not but mention to you when you accompanied me a little way from your own door. You spoke something encouraging, but they continued to haunt me, so that your kind letter was something less of a shock than it would otherwise have been, though not less of a sorrow.

How pathetic is your account of the piety with which the dear creature supported herself under those severe trials of mind and body with which it pleased God to prepare her for a happier world! The consolation which children and very young persons who have been religiously brought up draw from the Holy Scriptures ought to be habitually on the minds of adults of all ages, for the benefit of their own souls; and requires to be treated in a loftier and more comprehensive train of thought and feeling than has been usually bestowed upon it by writers. It does not, therefore, surprise me that you hinted

¹ Ellen Parry, who died April 28, 1840. Wordsworth saw her April 28, 1839. He was again at Summer Hill, Bath, in April, 1840. — Christopher Wordsworth.

at my own pen being employed upon the subject, as brought before the mind in your lamented daughter's own most touching case. I wish I were equal to anything so holy, but I feel that I am not. It is remarkable, however, that within the last few days the subject has been presented to my mind by two persons, both unknown to me; which is something of a proof how widely its importance is felt, and also that I am not wholly unworthy of treating it.

Your letter, my dear sir, I value exceedingly, and shall take the liberty (as I have done more than once, with fit reverence) of reading it in quarters where it is likely to do good, or rather where I know it must do good.

Wishing and praying that the Almighty may bestow upon yourself, the partner in your bereavement, and all the fellow-sufferers in your household that consolation and support which can proceed only from his grace, I remain, my dear Dr. Parry,

Most faithfully, your much obliged,

W. WORDSWORTH.

DCCXXV

William Wordsworth to Lady Frederick Bentinck

July, 1840.

On Monday morning, a little before nine, a beautiful and bright day, the Queen Dowager and her sister appeared at Rydal. I met them at the lower waterfall, with which her Majesty seemed much pleased. Upon hearing that it was not more than half a mile to the higher fall, she said briskly she would go; I walked by the Queen's side up to the higher waterfall, and she seemed to be much struck with the beauty of the scenery.

Upon quitting the park of Rydal, nearly opposite our own gate, the Queen was saluted with a pretty rural spectacle, — nearly fifty children, drawn up in avenue, with bright garlands in their hands, three large flags flying, and a band of music. They had come from Ambleside, and the garlands were such as are annually prepared at this season for a ceremony called “The Rush-Bearing”¹; and the parish clerk of Ambleside hit upon this way of showing the same respect to the Queen at Rydal which had been previously shown at Ambleside. I led the Queen to the principal points of view in our little domain, particularly to that, through the summer-house, which shows the lake of Rydal to such advantage. The Queen talked more than once about having a cottage among the lakes, which of course was nothing more than a natural way of giving vent to the pleasure which she had in the country.

Ever affectionately yours,

W. WORDSWORTH.

DCCXXVI

William Wordsworth to Benjamin Robert Haydon

Sept., 1840.

My dear Haydon,

We are all charmed with your etching. It is both poetically and pictorially conceived, and finely executed. I should have written immediately to thank you for it and for your letter and the enclosed one, which is interesting, but I wished to gratify you by writing a sonnet.

¹ On the last Saturday of July bundles of rushes and garlands of flowers are carried by the school children at Ambleside and Grasmere in procession to their church, and arranged as a decoration for the Sunday following. They are removed in the same way on Monday, and a school feast follows. — Ed.

I now send it, but with an earnest request that it may not be put into circulation for some little time, as it is warm from the brain, and may require, in consequence, some little retouching. It has this attached to it — which will add to its value in your eyes — that it was actually composed while I was climbing Helvellyn last Monday. My daughter and Mr. Quillinan were with me, and she rode every inch of the way to the summit (which I believe had scarcely ever been done before), and a magnificent day we had.

Sonnet suggested by Haydon's picture of the Duke of Wellington upon the Field of Waterloo twenty years after battle.

First reading: ¹

By art's bold privilege, warrior and war-horse stand
On ground yet strewn with their last battle's wreck.
Let the steed glory, while his master's hand
Lies fixed for ages, on his conscious neck.
But, by the chieftain's look, tho' at his side
Hangs that day's treasured sword, how firm a check
Is given to triumph, and all human pride !
Yon trophied mound shrinks to a shadowy speck
In his calm presence. Since the mighty deed
Him years have brought far nearer the grave's rest,
As shows that face time-worn. But he such seed
Has sowed that bears, we trust, the fruit of fame
In heaven; hence no one blushes for *thy name*,
Conqueror ! 'mid some sad thoughts divinely blest.

Composed while ascending Helvellyn, Monday, August
31st, 1840.

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH.

¹ The sonnet is printed here as sent to Haydon. — Ed.

DCCXXVII

William Wordsworth to Benjamin Robert Haydon

FRIDAY, Sept. 4th, [1840.]

My dear Mr. Haydon,

Correct the two last lines towards the close of the sonnet thus :

As shows that time-worn face. But he such seed
Hath sown, as yields, we trust, the fruit of fame
In heaven, etc.

You will see the reason of this alteration. It applies now to his life in general, and not to that particular act, as before. You may print the sonnet where and when you will if you think it will serve you, only it may be well that I should hear from you first, as you may have something to suggest either as to the letter or the lines.

Yours in haste,

WM. WORDSWORTH.

DCCXXVIII

William Wordsworth to Benjamin Robert Haydon

RYDAL MOUNT, Monday, Sept. 7, 1840.

I am quite ashamed to trouble you again, but after considering and re-considering, changing and re-changing, it has been resolved that the troublesome passage shall stand thus :

In his calm presence. Him the mighty deed
 Elates not, brought far nearer the grave's rest,
 As shows that time-worn face. But ¹ he such seed
 Hath sown as yields, we trust, etc.

Faithfully yours,

W. WORDSWORTH.

DCCXXIX

William Wordsworth to Benjamin Robert Haydon

RYDAL, Sept. 10th, [1840.]

By is certainly a better word than *through*; but I fear it cannot be employed on account of the subsequent line,

But, *by* the chieftain's look.

To me the two "bys" clash both to the ear and understanding, and it was on that account I changed the word. I have also a slight objection to the alliteration "by bold" occurring so soon. I am glad you like "elates not." As the passage first stood,

Since the mighty deed,

there was a transfer of the thought from the picture to the living man, which divided the sonnet into two parts. The presence of the portrait is now carried through till the last line, when the man is taken up. To prevent the possibility of a mistake I will repeat the passage as last sent, and in which state I consider it finished, and you will do what you like with it,

¹ "For" in the printed version of the sonnet. — Ed.

Him the mighty deed
 Elates not, brought far nearer the grave's rest,
 As shows that time-worn face. But he such seed
 Hath sown as yields, etc.

I hope you are right in thinking this the best of the three. I forget whether I thanked you for your sketch of the slave-trade picture. Your friendship has misled you. I must on no account be introduced. I was not present at the meeting, as matter of fact; and though from the first I took a lively interest in the abolition of slavery, except joining with those who petitioned Parliament, I was too little of a man of business to have an active part in the work. Besides, my place of abode would have prevented it, had I been so inclined. The only public act of mine connected with the event was sending forth that sonnet, which I addressed to Mr. Clarkson, upon the success of the undertaking. Thank you for your last letter. I am this moment (while dictating this letter) sitting to Mr. Pickersgill, who has kindly come down to paint me at leisure for Sir Robert Peel, in whose gallery at Drayton the portrait will probably be hung by that of my poor friend Southey. I am, my dear Haydon,

Yours faithfully,

WM. WORDSWORTH.

P.S.—Your suggestion about the engraver is very candid; but the verses taking so high a flight, and particularly in the line "Lies fixed for ages," it would be injurious to put forward the cold matter of fact, and the sense and spirit of the sonnet both demand that it should be suggested at the sight of the picture.

DCCXXX

William Wordsworth to Benjamin Robert Haydon

RYDAL MOUNT, Sept. 11, [1840.]

My dear Haydon,

I could not otherwise get rid of the prosaic declaration of the matter of fact that the hero was so much older. You will recollect that it at first stood,

Since the mighty deed
Him years, etc.

I know not what to do with the passage, if it be not well corrected as follows :

Him the mighty deed
Elates not : neither doth a cloud find rest
Upon that time-worn face ; for he such seed
Hath sown, etc.

I sent the sonnet, as it was before corrected, to Mr. Lowndes, as you desired. When you print it, if it be in course of next week, pray send a copy to this house, and another to me at Lowther Castle, whither I am going to-morrow.

Very faithfully yours,

W. WORDSWORTH.

The space for alteration in this troublesome passage, you will observe, was very confined, as it was necessary to advert to the Duke being much older, which is yet done in the words "time-worn face," but not so strongly as before.

W. W.

DCCXXXI

William Wordsworth to Henry Reed

RYDAL MOUNT, Sept. 14, 1840.

. . . I am much pleased by what you say in your letter of the 18th of May last upon the tract of *The Convention of Cintra*, and I think myself with some interest upon its being reprinted hereafter, along with my other writings. But the respect which, in common with all the rest of the rational part of the world, I bear for the Duke of Wellington will prevent my reprinting the pamphlet during his life-time. It has not been in my power to read the volumes of his dispatches which I hear so highly spoken of, but I am convinced that nothing they contain could alter my opinion of the injurious tendency of that or any other Convention conducted upon such principles. It was, I repeat, gratifying to me that you should have spoken of that work as you do, and particularly that you should have considered it in relation to my poems somewhat in the same manner you had done in respect to my little volume on the Lakes. . . .

I send you a sonnet composed the other day while I was climbing. I remain, my dear sir,

Your much obliged friend,

WM. WORDSWORTH.

DCCXXXII

William Wordsworth to Lady Frederick Bentinck

RYDAL MOUNT, Sept. 26, 1840.

Dear Lady Frederick,

Mr. Rogers and I had a very pleasant journey to Rydal the day we left all our kind friends at Lowther. We alighted at Lyulph's Tower, and saw the waterfall in great power after the night's rain, the sun shining full into the chasm and making a splendid rainbow of the spray. Afterwards, walking through Mr. Askew's grounds, we saw the lake to the greatest possible advantage. Mr. R. left on Thursday; the morning most beautiful, though it rained afterwards. I know not how he could tear himself away from this lovely country at this charming season. I say charming, notwithstanding this is a dull day; but yesterday was most glorious. I hope our excellent friend does not mean to remain in London. . . . We have had no visits from strangers since my return, so that the press of the season seems to be over. The leaves are not changed here so much as at Lowther, and of course not yet so beautiful; nor are they ever quite so as with you, your trees being so much finer, and your woods so very much more extensive. We have a great deal of coppice, which makes but a poor show in autumn compared with timber trees.

Your son George knows what he has to expect in the few sheets which I enclose for him.

With many thanks for the endless kind attentions which I received from you and others under your father's hospitable roof, and with my grateful respects to him, and a thousand good wishes for all, I remain, my wife and daughter joining in these feelings, my dear Lady Frederick, affectionately yours,

WM. WORDSWORTH.

DCCXXXIII

William Wordsworth to Lady Frederick Bentinck

RYDAL MOUNT, Monday Evening, [1840.]

The accident¹ after which you inquire, dear Lady Frederick, with so much feeling might have been fatal, but through God's mercy we escaped without bodily injury, as far as I know, worth naming. These were the particulars: About three miles beyond Keswick, on the Ambleside road, is a small bridge, from the top of which we got sight of the mail-coach coming towards us, at about forty yards' distance, just before the road begins to descend a narrow, steep, and winding slope. Nothing was left for James, who drove the gig in which we were, but to cross the bridge, and — as the road narrowed up the slope that was in our front — to draw up as close to the wall on our left (our side of the road) as possible. This he did, both of us hoping that the coachman would slacken his pace down the hill, and pass us as far from our wheel as the road would allow. But he did neither. On the contrary, he drove furiously down the hill; and though, as we afterwards ascertained by the track of his wheels, he had a yard width of road to spare, he made no use of it. In consequence of this recklessness and his want of skill, the wheel of his coach struck our wheel most violently, drove back our horse and gig some yards, and then sent us all together through a small gap in the wall, with the stones of the wall tumbling about us, into a plantation that lay a yard perpendicular below the level of the road from which the horse and gig, with us in it, had been

¹ It occurred on November 11th, 1840. — Ed.

driven. The shafts were broken off close to the carriage, and we were partly thrown and partly leaped out. After breaking the traces, the horse leaped back into the road and galloped off, the shafts and traces sticking to him ; nor did the poor creature stop till he reached the turnpike at Grasmere, seven miles from the spot where the mischief was done. We sent by the coach for a chaise to take us to Rydal, and hired a cart to take the broken gig to be mended at Keswick.

The mercy was that the violent shock from the coach did not tear off our wheels, for if this had been done, James, and probably I also, must have fallen under the hind wheels of the coach, and in all likelihood been killed. We have since learned that the coachman had only just come upon the road, which is in a great many places very dangerous, and that he was wholly unpractised in driving four-in-hand. Pray excuse this long and minute account. I should have written to you next day, but I waited, hoping to be able to add that my indisposition was gone, as I now trust it is. . . .

Dear Lady Frederick, affectionately yours,

WM. WORDSWORTH.

DCCXXXIV

*William Wordsworth to John Taylor Coleridge*¹

Nov. 28th, 1840.

. . . There are certain principles as to flower gardens upon which my mind is made up: for example, whenever a house fronts a grand or sublime scene of

¹ Sir John Taylor Coleridge (1790-1876), nephew of Samuel Taylor Coleridge. — Ed.

mountains, I would not admit beds of flowers and shrubs, with lawns interspersed, those diversities of shape which are so pleasing when we meet with them in wild Nature. I would either have no flowers, or an architectural garden with terraces and formal beds, after the manner of the French or Italians. But a scheme of this kind requires something of an antique air in the house to correspond with it. In such a site, or with such a building, the garden would at once be referred to the house, and would obviously depend upon it, without having other pretensions. Nevertheless, we often see, in such situations, a disposition of flowers and shrubs and lawns, which is neither Art nor Nature, and accordingly it is to me displeasing to look upon. . . . When the landscape has no grandeur, but is somewhat Arcadian, a little Cyclades of exotic shrubs and flowers may be introduced in front of a house with good effect. . . .

DCCXXXV

William Wordsworth to Edward Moxon

December 17, 1840.

Dear Mr. Moxon,

You told me *The Excursion* was out of print. What do you say to reprinting it in double column, stereotyped all but the pages, so that the same plates might serve hereafter, the paging being altered for the concluding part of the volume, when the whole shall be published in one? I have two motives for this: the one a desire to make the book acceptable to mechanics and others who have little money to spare; and next to show from many instances, of which this would be one, that books are likely

to be sold as cheap as they can be afforded, should the term of copyright be extended. In fact, they could in that case be sold cheaper, since—there being no dread of competition—editions might be larger, and would, of course, be sold at less price. Let me hear from you on this point at your early convenience. . . .

Sincerely yours,

W. WORDSWORTH.

1841

DCCXXXVI

William Wordsworth to Henry Reed

RYDAL MOUNT, Jan. 13, 1841.

My dear Mr. Reed,

. . . Mr. Allston and I became acquainted many years ago through our common friend Mr. Coleridge, who had seen much of Mr. Allston when they were both living at Rome. Had he remained in London, Mr. Allston would soon have made his way to public approbation ; his genius and style of painting were too much above the standard of taste at that time prevalent to be duly acknowledged at once by the many ; but so convinced am I that he would have succeeded in obtaining general admiration that I have often regretted his speedy return to his native country, not so much because we have lost him (for that feeling would be more than counterbalanced by what America has gained) as because while living in Europe he would have continued to be more in the way of the works of the great masters. . . . You mention the sonnet I wrote upon Haydon's picture of the Duke of Wellington. I have known Haydon, and Wilkie also, from the time of their contemporaneous introduction to the world as artists. . . . Haydon is bent upon coming to Rydal next summer, with a view to paint a likeness of me ; not as a mere matter-of-fact portrait, but one of a poetical character, in which he will endeavour to place his friend in some favourite scene

of these mountains. I am rather afraid, I own, of any attempt of this kind, notwithstanding my high opinion of his ability ; but if he keeps in his present mind, which I doubt, it would be in vain to oppose his inclination. He is a great enthusiast, possessed also of a most active intellect ; but he wants that submission and steady good sense which is absolutely necessary for the adequate development of power in that art to which he is attached.

As I am on the subject of painting, it may be worth while to add that Pickersgill came down last summer to paint a portrait of me for Sir Robert Peel's gallery at Drayton Manor. It was generally thought here that this work was more successful as a likeness than the one he painted some years ago for St. John's College at the request of the Master and Fellows.

There has recently been published in London a volume of some of Chaucer's tales and poems modernised ; this little specimen originated in what I attempted with *The Prioress's Tale*, and if the book should find its way to America you will see in it two further specimens from myself. I had no further connection with the publication than by making a present of these to one of the contributors. Let me, however, recommend to your notice *The Prologue*, and *The Franklin's Tale*. They are both by W. Horne, a gentleman unknown to me, but are, the latter in particular, very well done. Mr. Leigh Hunt has not failed in *The Manciple's Tale*, which I myself modernised many years ago ; but though I much admire the genius of Chaucer as displayed in this performance, I could not place my version at the disposal of the editor, as I deemed the subject somewhat too indelicate for pure taste, to be offered to the world at this time of day. Mr. Horne has much hurt this publication by not abstaining

from *The Reeve's Tale*. This, after making all allowance for the rude manners of Chaucer's age, is intolerable, and, by indispensably softening down the incidents, he has killed the spirit of that humour — gross and farcical — that pervades the original. When the work was first mentioned to me I protested as strongly as possible against admitting any coarseness or indelicacy, so that my conscience is clear of countenancing aught of that kind.

So great is my admiration for Chaucer's genius and so profound my reverence for him as an instrument in the hands of Providence for spreading the light of Literature through his native land, that — notwithstanding the defects and faults in this publication — I am glad of it, as a means of making many acquainted with the original who would otherwise be ignorant of everything about him but his name.

I shall always, dear sir, be happy to hear from you, and believe me to be,

Ever faithfully and gratefully yours,

WM. WORDSWORTH.

DCCXXXVII

William Wordsworth to John Peace

RYDAL MOUNT, Jan. 19, 1841.

My dear Mr. Peace,

. . . I have no special reason for writing at this moment of time, but I have long wished to thank you for the *Apology for Cathedrals*, which I have learned is from your pen. The little work does you great credit; it is full of that wisdom which the heart and imagination alone could adequately supply for such a subject, and is, moreover,

very pleasingly diversified by styles of treatment all good in their kind. I need add no more than that I entirely concur in the views you take; but what avails it? the mischief is done, and they who have been most prominent in setting it on foot will have to repent of their narrow comprehension, which, however, is no satisfaction to us, who from the first foresaw the evil tendency of the measure.

Though I can make but little use of my eyes in writing or reading, I have lately been reading Cowper's *Task* aloud, and in so doing was tempted to look over the parallelisms for which Mr. Southey was, in his edition, indebted to you. Knowing how comprehensive your acquaintance with poetry is, I was rather surprised that you did not notice the identity of the thought, and accompanying illustrations of it, in a passage of Shenstone's *Ode upon Rural Elegance*, compared with one in *The Task*,¹ where Cowper speaks of the inextinguishable love of the country as manifested by the inhabitants of cities in their culture of plants and flowers, where the want of air, cleanliness, and light is so unfavourable to their growth and beauty. The germ of the main thought is to be found in Horace:

Nempe inter varias nutritur sylva columnas,
Laudaturque domus longos quae prospicit agros.
Naturam expellas furca, tamen usque recurret.

Epistolae, I, x. 22-24.

Pray write to me soon. . . . Ever, my dear friend,
Faithfully, your obliged

WM. WORDSWORTH.

¹ Book IV, "It is a flame," etc., compared with Shenstone's *Ode to the Duchess of Somerset*, "Her impulse nothing may restrain."—W. W.

DCCXXXVIII

William Wordsworth to Lord Mahon

RYDAL MOUNT, March 3d, 1841.

My dear Lord Mahon,

Many thanks for your second letter and the extracts from Lord John Russell's to you. Public opinion having the power which it has at present and is likely to have, I think with you that there is no likelihood of an attempt being made to hold back from republication any valuable work whatever. Besides, Serjeant Talfourd's bill provided against that in a clause which, if there had been any defect in its construction, might without difficulty have been improved.

I replied briefly to the three objections which you will find in the enclosed extract from a letter Sir R. Peel was so obliging as to write to me, the only one I ever had from him on the subject; but in an interview with which he honoured me last summer we had a pretty long conversation upon it, and it is remarkable that then he did not revert to any of those objections, but dwelt in general terms upon the evils of monopoly. In particular he deprecated the mischief which might arise from confining the circulation of improved discoveries in science—he instanced arithmetic—to the books through which they had been first made known. I must own I thought this rather an out-of-the-way apprehension, for how would it be done? . . .

No combination of booksellers could now be so blind or perverse as not to be aware that, education and a taste for reading having spread so widely, and its being certain that they will spread more and more, their interest would

be promoted less by selling at a low price to multitudes than at a high one to a few; and there is, in this consideration, a sufficient answer to all the vague things that have been dinned into our ears on monopoly.

The observation you have made upon your present aim not precluding future improvements reconciles me to what I cannot but think an imperfect, though a prudent, measure.

In regard to posthumous works, which are often kept back that the author may bestow more labour upon them, and are therefore, if they be good, entitled to especial regard, I may be allowed to say that a boon of two years (if that be granted) in addition to twenty-eight, which the present law secures, is not an acquisition worth thinking about. Let us, however, be thankful for what we can get, and be assured, my dear Lord Mahon, that I am duly sensible of the obligations Literature is under to you for undertaking a bill which is sure to meet with vexatious opposition from many persons unworthy of the seats they hold in the House of Commons, and with but a lax support from many others, who may have no objections either to the principles or details of your measure. I have the honour to be,

Faithfully, your lordship's

WM. WORDSWORTH.

DCCXXXIX

William Wordsworth to Edward Moxon

March 4, 1841.

. . . I have intrusted the looking over the six volumes¹ to Mr. Carter, who is much more able than myself to detect errors. . . . He will have his papers ready to

¹ For the edition of 1842.—Ed.

send off in a couple of days, and then the printing may commence.

By way of secret I must let you know that I have just been copying out about 2000 lines of miscellaneous poems from MSS., some of which date so far back as 1793; and others from that time, at various periods, to the present day. If I could muster 1000 lines more, there would be enough for another volume, to match pretty well in size with the rest; but this not being the case, I am rather averse to publication. You will hear more of this hereafter.¹ . . .

Ever faithfully yours,

W. WORDSWORTH.

DCCXL

William Wordsworth to Alexander Dyce

12 BRYANSTON SQUARE,
7th April (my birthday, 71), [1841.]

My dear Sir,

When you read *The Excursion* do not read the quarto, — it is improved in the octavo edition, — but the quarto may have its value with you as a collector. Believe me,

Yours faithfully,

W. WORDSWORTH.

¹ It became the volume of *Poems, chiefly of Early and Late Years*, which was first published in 1842. — Ed.

DCCXLI

William Wordsworth to John Peace

12 NORTH PARADE, BATH, April 19, 1841.

My dear Mr. Peace,

Here I am and have been since last Wednesday evening. I came down the Wye and passed through Bristol, but arriving there at the moment the railway train was about to set off, and being in the company of four ladies (Miss Fenwick, Mrs. Wordsworth, and my daughter, and niece), I had not a moment to spare, so could not call on you, my good friend, which I truly regretted. Pray spare an hour or two to come here, and then we can fix a day when, along with my daughter, I can visit Bristol, see you, Mr. Cottle, and Mr. Wade. . . .

All unite in kindest regards.

Ever yours,

WM. WORDSWORTH.

[On the 24th of April, 1841, Mr. Robert G. Clarke, of St. George's, Norwich, wrote to Wordsworth to find out if he held the copyright of the volume of *Selections* from his poems (Moxon's 18mo edition), and if there was any chance of its being republished in a still cheaper form for more extensive use in schools and families than hitherto. "Though all masters must value it and know it is well worth its price as *the best book ever published for young persons*, yet they do not like to furnish more than the higher classes with the book at 5s. I think that an edition of 2s. 6d. is highly desirable and would be a great boon to the public."

On the back of this letter Wordsworth wrote to Moxon from 12 North Parade, Bath, that he had answered this correspondent by saying that he "found the expense of advertising such a book, to be sold at half a crown, would swallow up all the profits," but that he would send his letter to the publisher for his decision.

"The great objection to such a book at such a price seems to be the difficulty of making its existence known to those who would be most likely to become purchasers."]

DCCXLII

William Wordsworth to Edward Quillinan

April 29, 1841.

My dear Friend,

I cannot suffer this letter to go without a word from me: and first of dear Mrs. Wordsworth — her complaint is lumbago and sciatica, the younger sister and scarcely distinguishable from tic-douloureux. But here my poetical reputation served us. I knew no one in Nottingham, but bethought me of the Howitts. There are two brothers of them; on one I called to state my situation and found that there was a third brother, a physician. Him I sent for, and William and Mary Howitt insisted on the invalid being brought to their house, which was a great comfort on the eve of an election. We made one attempt to move her in vain; in the afternoon we succeeded, and she passed through the wide market-place of Nottingham, wrapped in a blanket (she could not be dressed) and in a chair, followed by a hundred boys and curious persons. So that she preceded Sir Thomas Denham and Ferguson in the honour of being chaired, and was called by us parliament woman for the loyal borough of Nottingham.

As to Rotha she is a sweet, clever child, and we were the best companions in the world. As Miss H. says, we must take care not to spoil her; she is wonderfully intelligent.

God bless you. I am called away.

Ever faithfully and gratefully yours,

W. WORDSWORTH.

DCCXLIII

William Wordsworth to John Peace

BATH, May 11, 1841.

My dear Mr. Peace,

This morning my dear daughter was married in St. James's in this place. . . .

To-morrow we leave Bath for Wells, and thence to the old haunts of Mr. Coleridge and myself and dear sister, about Alfoxden. Adieu.

W. W.

DCCXLIV

William Wordsworth to Henry Reed

May 15, 1841.

My dear Mr. Reed,

I am now on a visit, along with Mrs. Wordsworth and our friend Miss Fenwick, to Miss F.'s brother-in-law, Mr. Popham, who lives in the rich and beautiful vale of Taunton, in Somersetshire. It is six weeks since we left home, and your letter of the 14th of April was duly forwarded to me at Bath, where we have been residing for about a month. . . .

W. W.

DCCXLV

*William Wordsworth to Christopher Wordsworth*¹

RYDAL MOUNT, Aug. 11th, 1841.

. . . Yesterday I had a very interesting visit from a person you must once have known well, Mr. Le Grice.² He spoke with much feeling of you, and with much modesty, and unaffected humility, of his own academic course and character in contrast with yours. He left us, enclosed in a little pamphlet, a speech of his upon Cottage Gardens, three or four copies of a sonnet (his own writing), of which you are the subject. As you may not have seen the verses I send them. We were agreeably surprised by the sight of them after he was gone; for when he put the little pamphlet into my hands he had made no mention of them. He sat nine years in the same class with Coleridge, and by his side, having the joint use with Coleridge of certain

¹ His brother. The first part of this letter — not reprinted here — was inserted in a note to the *Epitaph in the Chapel-Yard of Langdale, Westmoreland* (see *Poetical Works*, Eversley edition, Vol. VIII, p. 121, beginning "I send you" and ending "to my mind.") — Ed.

² Charles Valentine Le Grice (1773-1858) was for eleven years a class-fellow of Coleridge and Lamb at Christ's Hospital (1781-1792), when he became senior 'Grecian.' He afterwards went to Trinity College, Cambridge, where he won the chief declamation prize, with Christopher Wordsworth (the poet's brother) as second. He took orders, and was incumbent at Penzance from 1806 to 1831; living afterwards, when he inherited it, at the family property of Trearife, Cornwall. In his *Essays of Elia* Charles Lamb alludes to the wit combats between Coleridge and Le Grice, Coleridge being "the Spanish Galleon," and Le Grice "the English man-of-war." Le Grice wrote *An Imitation of Horace's First Epistle* (1794), an *Analysis of Paley's Philosophy* (1795), and afterwards some poems, and translations from the classics. — Ed.

dictionaries and books of reference, according to the custom of the school by which they were assigned to the scholars in pairs. He told us several anecdotes of Coleridge, of whose life, since they appeared together at Christ's Hospital till Coleridge left College abruptly, he must have known more than any one else possibly could. I have heard Coleridge speak of him hundreds and hundreds of time. Le Grice told me he had just been to visit Slatterthwaite's grave, and that he would have gone fifty miles out of his way for that purpose. I was much pleased with this burst of feeling as evinced by one who, according to his own account of himself, had in youth abandoned himself far too much to careless levity; and this coincides with what Coleridge used to say of him. He is now, and perhaps has long been, serious and thoughtful in conversation; and I assure you I have not for a long time had a visitor in whom I was so much interested.

Le Grice told us also many particulars of Charles Lamb's boyhood. He remembered also having once heard you deliver a charge before a religious society to certain missionaries, which impressed him more, both by the matter and manner, than any charge that he had ever heard delivered. I suppose it was spoken before the Society for promoting Christian Knowledge. . . .

Your most affectionate brother,

WM. WORDSWORTH.

DCCXLVI

William Wordsworth to Henry Reed

RYDAL MOUNT, August 16, 1841.

My dear Mr. Reed,

. . . It appears to me next to impossible that peace can long be preserved in your country. Your government, I fear, is too feeble; nor will your tumultuous democracy, I apprehend, be reconciled to subordination till war, either foreign or civil, or perhaps both, has taught them the necessity of it.

. . . Do you know Miss Peabody of Boston? She has just sent me, with the highest eulogy, certain essays of Mr. Emerson. Our Carlyle and he appear to be what the French used to call *esprits forts*, though the French idols showed their spirit after a somewhat different fashion. Our two present philosophers, who have taken a language which they suppose to be English for their vehicle, are verily *par nobile fratrum*. . . .

Ever faithfully yours,

WM. WORDSWORTH.

DCCXLVII

William Wordsworth to John Peace

RYDAL MOUNT, Sept. 4, 1841.

My dear Peace,

. . . We made a very agreeable tour in Devonshire, going by Exeter to Plymouth, and returning along the coast by Salisbury and Winchester to London. In London and its neighbourhood we stayed not quite a month.

During this tour we visited my old haunts, at and about Alfoxden and Nether Stowey, and at Coleorton, where we stayed several days. These were farewell visits for life, and, of course, not a little interesting. . . .

Ever faithfully yours,
W. WORDSWORTH.

DCCXLVIII

William Wordsworth to Edward Moxon

October 2, 1841.

. . . To gratify Haydon I wrote lately a sonnet on his picture of Wellington, etc., and placed it at his disposal, either to publish, when and where he liked, or to circulate in MS. It was published accordingly, but with so many gross typographical blunders that I am resolved nothing of mine shall make its first appearance in that way again.

DCCXLIX

William Wordsworth to Henry Taylor

Wednesday, [3d Nov., 1841.]

My dear Mr. Taylor,

Will you be so kind as to substitute for the third line of the sonnet beginning

Not to the object specially designed,¹

this reading, —

Bear this firm truth in constant memory,

for

Good to promote or curb depravity.

¹ See the "Sonnets upon the Punishment of Death," No. V (*Poetical Works*, Vol. VIII, p. 106). — Ed.

This alteration arises out of a wish to avoid repetition, which to a certain degree was inevitable in treating the subject as I have done, — with a desire that each sonnet should be without absolute or great dependence on the one preceding it.

Thanks for your statistical paper; but allow me to say a statistical book on this — and almost every other truly important subject — is much less respected by me than it appears to be in your judgment. Here is a paper showing that capital punishments are much diminished, but not throwing (as how could it?) a single ray of light on the causes. May not that be mainly, not that there is less occasion for them, but that notions of a feeble and narrow humanity, and a spurious Christianity, have spread so as to prevent prosecutions, or have influenced judges in their charges (for instance, Judge M. in more cases than one) and juries in their verdicts.

Ever faithfully yours,

WM. WORDSWORTH.

DCCL

*William Wordsworth to Christopher Wordsworth*¹

RYDAL, Nov. 5, 1841.

My dear Christopher,

Your father left us yesterday, having been just a week under our roof. The weather was favourable, and he seemed to enjoy himself much. His muscular strength, as proved by the walks we took together, is great. One day we were nearly four hours on foot, without resting, and he did not appear in the least fatigued.

¹ His nephew and biographer. — Ed.

He was anxious to see Charles.¹ He will reach Winchester this afternoon, I hope without injury.

Yours, etc.,
W. W.

DCCLI

William Wordsworth to Edward Moxon

November 5, 1841.

My dear Mr. Moxon,

. . . Mr. Aubrey de Vere is very much interested in the publication of a selection from my poems, but materially different in the choice from Mr. Hine's. What do you say to that? Dare you venture upon it? He has furnished me with a list according to his own choice. . . .

Ever faithfully yours,
W. WORDSWORTH.

DCCLII

William Wordsworth to Edward Moxon

Dec. 24, 1841.

My dear Mr. Moxon,

The few words I have to say must be an expression of indignation at hearing that you were charged the enormous sum of £83 for corrections in carrying the six volumes through the press. I know not what check publishers have upon printers, and what is the course of practice as to charging for alterations. But sure I am that, in common justice, things ought not to go on in the way you have been treated; for I affirm upon the strength of my own memory, and upon a much better authority, — that

¹ Brother of Christopher, Master at Winchester, afterwards Bishop of St. Andrews. — Ed.

of Mr. Carter's young clerk, through whose hands passed my sheets of the six volumes, excepting a very few of the first volume, — that of the alterations very much the greatest part were caused by the inattention of the printers to directions *precisely given*, or to their own gross blunders. It was, I own, a case that required particular attention, because the whole volume of the *Yarrow Revisited* was interwoven with the poems previously collected, and the arrangement was, for good reasons, in several instances altered; but the directions given by Mr. Carter and myself were precise and distinct; and it is the first duty of a printer to attend to such directions. I am sorry to say there was a like carelessness shown in carrying the volume of sonnets through the press. . . . I will here add, by-the-bye, that, being prompted to take leave of Italy in verse, I wrote lately six sonnets upon that suggestion, and have added eleven others that partly rose out of the farewell. I should like these thirty sonnets some time or other to be printed in the same class, as they were all composed during the current year.

Yours faithfully,
W. W.

DCCLIII

William Wordsworth to Edward Quillinan

[Date unknown. Probably 1841.]

I do not acknowledge the force of the objections made to my publishing the specimens of Chaucer, nevertheless I have yielded to the judgments of others, and have not sent more than *The Cuckoo and Nightingale*.¹

¹ He also published "modernisations" of *The Prioress's Tale* and of *Troilus and Cressida*. See the *Poetical Works*, Eversley edition, Vol. II, pp. 240-269. — Ed.

Tegg is what you say. He has written two long and stupid letters to the *Times*, in one of which the blockhead says, "Look at the profits, the enormous ones of such and such people —"

The large and increasing instant demand for Literature of a certain quality holds out the strongest temptation to men who could do better, to write below themselves to suit the taste of the superficial many. What we want is not books to catch purchasers themselves not worth a moment's notice, not light but solid matter, not things treated in a broad and coarse, or, at best, a superficial way, but profound or refined works comprehensive of human interests through time as well as space. Kotzebue was acted and read at once from Cadiz to Moscow; what has become of him now?

But Tegg has the impudence to affirm that another *Paradise Lost*, or a poem as good, would at once produce £10,000 from Mr. Murray and others. *Credat Judaeus Apella*. *Paradise Lost* is indeed bought because people for their own credit must now have it. But how few, how very few, read it! When it is read by the multitude, it is — almost exclusively — not as a poem, but a religious book.

But even were it true that substantial work would at once secure a wide circulation, justice would still be violated by withholding from the descendants or heirs of a great author the further advantage he is so strongly entitled to. Tegg says his "line is to watch expiring copyrights"; and would be, no doubt, if he dared to murder the authors for the sake of getting sooner at his prey. But too much of this disgusting subject. . . .

DCCLIV

William Wordsworth to Edward Quillinan

[Date unknown. Probably 1841.]

We have read your verses¹ with much pleasure ; they want neither eye nor feeling, and are upon the whole — which is saying a great deal — worthy of the subject. But the expression is here and there faulty, as I am pretty sure you must be yourself aware.

“Piles” ought to be *pile*, but “aisles,” a necessary word, has caused a sacrifice to rhyme. “Ecstatic” is a word not too strong perhaps, though referring to stone, considered apart from the human heart ; but coupled with it thus, it strikes me as being so.

To “conscious pillars” I should have preferred an epithet addressed to the sight, and appropriate to architecture. I should like *chequered* better than “mottled,” which is a word almost always used in an unfavourable or mean sense, as “mottled with measles,” “mottled soap,” etc.

“By her *sculpture*” seems too strong a word for the touch of the moon ; and “flecked,” as far as I am acquainted with the word, applies to spots on the surface having reference to shade or colour, and not to incision.

The primary sense — that most frequently used — of the word “anatomy,” being the art or act of dissection, causes some obscurity or confusion when joined with the phrase of

¹ *Poems*, by Edward Quillinan, were published by Moxon, London, in 1853. The verses here referred to are entitled *Interior of Canterbury Cathedral, as seen by Moonlight, September 30, 1841*. They were evidently altered, partly according to the suggestions of this letter of Wordsworth's, before they were sent to press. — Ed.

what he was ; which might be avoided — though perhaps with some loss of force — if it was not for the confusion, by altering the passage thus : —

His grim anatomy,
So fall the rays *shed by the moon*,
That in their silent strife,

or *from the clear moon*.

A better epithet might be found than "*swelling* with richness bland." You must be well aware that this is the worst line in the poem. All the rest is beautiful in feeling, as it is faultless in expression. . . .

1842

DCCLV

William Wordsworth to Joshua Stanger

January 16, 1842.

My dear Sir,

I take it very kindly that you should have thought of me and my family in your distress, and am especially obliged, as your letter gave us the first intimation of the decease of your lamented brother,¹ which we should otherwise have abruptly learned from a newspaper of the same day. We also feel indebted to you for having entered into these painful details of the long-continued malady which, in spite of medical efforts and the affectionate attentions of his beloved sister² and yourself, carried him in the noontide of life to his grave. This removal has naturally thrown my mind back as far as to Dr. Calvert's grandfather, his father, and sister — the former of whom³ was, as you know, among my intimate friends — and his Uncle Raisley, whom I have so much cause to remember with gratitude for his testamentary remembrance of me, when the greatest part of our patrimony was kept back from us by injustice. It may be satisfactory to your wife for me to declare upon this melancholy occasion that my friend's bequest enabled me to devote myself to literary pursuits, independent of any necessity to look at pecuniary

¹ Brother-in-law, Dr. John Calvert. — Ed.

² Mrs. Joshua Stanger. — Ed. ³ The father and grandfather. — Ed.

emolument, so that my talents, such as they might be, were free to take their natural course. Your brothers, Raisley and William, were both so well known to me, and I have so many reasons to respect them, that I cannot forbear saying that my sympathy with this last bereavement is deepened by the remembrance that they both have been taken from you. Let it not be supposed, however, that either myself or any of my family are insensible to the sources of consolation to which you so affectingly point, a consolation which we know and feel will through the goodness of God embrace them all. . . .

I remain, my dear sir,

Sincerely and affectionately yours,

WM. WORDSWORTH.

DCCLVI

William Wordsworth to Edward Moxon

18th January, 1842.

My dear Mr. Moxon,

Your account of the depressed state of the book-trade makes me almost indifferent about publishing the volume which I am preparing. I, nevertheless, continue making corrections, and getting it transcribed by my kind friends and inmates. It is now quite ready for the press; and I'll give you a slight sketch of its contents. First, a poem of seventy-five Spenserian stanzas, twenty-three of which have already been published, in the former editions, under the title of *The Female Vagrant*. The whole poem was written in the years 1793-1794; but the yet unpublished parts have been carefully revised. Next came three or four elegiac poems, two of them upon visiting the grave of Burns. Next, an epistle of thirty-four lines addressed

to Sir G. Beaumont in 1811; then other miscellaneous poems, written about and after that period. Several others of much more recent date down to the present time (that is, since the *Yarrow Revisited*); the twelve sonnets of the appendix to be reprinted, and the other miscellaneous ones, with the final fourteen¹; nearly 800 lines of *Memorials of my Italian Tour*; the two versions of Chaucer, printed by Mr. Powell; and lastly, a tragedy,² written in my twenty-fifth and twenty-sixth years, and which has lain by me till now. The whole will, if printed — one sonnet on a page, and only two Spenserian stanzas — make a volume fully as thick, I think, as the thickest of the six.

And now for the mode of proceeding. I cannot tell you at once. I would not, on any account, print less than two thousand, and am extremely averse to striking off less than three thousand, because I do not think it advisable to stereotype, these poems being designed to be interspersed in some future edition of the whole, perhaps in double columns.

Your allusion to the *Yarrow Revisited* — which, as you say, was an edition of only 1500 copies — does not bear upon the case, as you will instantly perceive when you recollect how many thousand copies of my poems have been sold since that publication, and also turn your thoughts to the consequent probability that a proportionate number of those persons who possess the six volumes will complete their set by purchasing the intended volume. In future editions *The Female Vagrant* will, of course, be omitted as a separate piece; but the reprinting of it here is indispensable. . . .

Ever yours,

WM. WORDSWORTH.

¹ The "Sonnets upon the Punishment of Death." — Ed.

² *The Borderers*. — Ed.

DCCLVII

William Wordsworth to John Peace

February 23d, 1842.

. . . Your *Descant* amused me, but I must protest against your system, which would discard punctuation to the extent you propose. It would, I think, destroy the harmony of blank verse when skillfully written. What would become of the pauses at the third syllable, followed by an "and," or any such word, without the rest—which a comma, when consistent with the sense, calls upon the reader to make—and which being made, he starts with the weak syllable that follows, as from the beginning of a verse? I am sure Milton would have supported me in this opinion. Thomson wrote his blank verse before his ear was formed as it was when he wrote the *Castle of Indolence*, and some of his short rhyme poems. It was, therefore, rather hard in you to select him as an instance of punctuation abused.

I am glad that you concur in my view on the punishment of death. An outcry, as I expected, has been raised against me by weak-minded humanitarians. What do you think of one person having opened a battery of nineteen fourteen-pounders upon me, i.e. nineteen sonnets, in which he gives himself credit for having blown me and my system to atoms? Another sonneteer has had a solitary shot at me from Ireland.

Ever faithfully yours,

W. WORDSWORTH.

DCCLVIII

William Wordsworth to Henry Reed

RYDAL MOUNT, March 1, 1842.

My dear Sir,

. . . I have sent you three sonnets upon certain *Aspects of Christianity in America*, having, as you will see, a reference to the subject upon which you wished me to write. I wish they had been more worthy of the subject; I hope, however, you will not disapprove of the connection, which I have thought myself warranted in tracing, between the Puritan fugitives and Episcopacy. The sonnets are already printed, and will be published, I hope, before I can receive an answer to this letter, in a new volume of poems which I am carrying through the press. They are miscellaneous, but will contain the tragedy of which you have heard something. It was written so far back as 1795-1796.

By the same packet I shall send a copy of those sonnets to Bishop Doane. . . .

Your much obliged

WM. WORDSWORTH.

DCCLIX

William Wordsworth to Edward Moxon

March 27, 1842.

Dear Mr. Moxon,

I write this merely to ask that you would give me an assurance that the four errors of the press pointed out in the three first pages of the poems upon Italy have been, or will be, corrected according to the directions given in

my former letter. A slip of *errata* would not answer, because such things when found in a book are scarcely ever attended to, . . . and I cannot bear the idea that these poems should start with four bits of nonsense, the worse, because not one in twenty would find it out ; but the twenty-first, who did find it out, would say, "What stuff does Mr. Wordsworth write !" You will perhaps have thought that I was splenetic, in insisting upon this volume not being sent to the reviewers. It is a thing which I exceedingly dislike, as done seemingly to propitiate.

If any work comes from an author of distinction, they will be sure to get hold of it, if they think it would serve their purpose to do so. If they be inclined to speak well of it, either from its own merits or their good opinion of the author in general, to send the book is superfluous ; and if they are hostile, it would only gratify the editor's or reviewer's vanity, and set an edge upon his malice. There are secrets of human nature which my turn for dramatic writing (early put aside) taught me ; or rather that turn took its rise from knowledge of this kind with which observation had furnished me.

Mrs. W. protests against all this, and says if I am to write in such a strain I had better take the pen into my own hands. Good-bye.

Ever faithfully yours,

WM. WORDSWORTH.

DCCLX

William Wordsworth to Edward Moxon

April 3, 1842.

My dear Mr. Moxon,

I see no reason for changing my mind about sending to the Reviews. My friend and present neighbour, Mr. Faber (who has just published a volume with Rivington), tells me that he has not sent his work to the Reviewers, nor is it his habit to do so, though well aware that a favourable review—in the *Quarterly*, for instance—helps sale very considerably. I cannot tolerate the idea of courting the favour (or seeming to do so) of any critical tribunal in this country, the House of Commons not excepted. . . . I suppose by this time my volume is out. You need not fear its not being noticed enough, whether for praise or censure.

Ever sincerely yours,

WM. WORDSWORTH.

DCCLXI

William Wordsworth to Dora Quillinan

April 7, 1842.

My dear Daughter,

I cannot suffer the morning of my birthday to pass without telling you that my heart is full of you and all that concerns you.

Yesterday was lovely, and this morning is not less so. God grant that we may all have like sunshine in our hearts so long as we remain in this transient world.

It is about half-past nine ; two hours hence we go to pay a condoling visit to poor Fanny. Mr. Carter, James, and I all attended the funeral on Monday ; it was a beautiful

afternoon, the light of the declining sun glowing upon Fairfield, as described in *The Excursion* at Dawson's funeral.¹ The psalm sung before raising the coffin from its station before the door, and afterwards as the procession moved between the trees, was most touching. Mr. Greenwood was there and told me the name (which I forget) of the composer, who lived two hundred years ago. The music was worthy of the occasion and admirably given, the schoolmaster—a very respectable man—leading the four or five voices; upon these occasions the women do not sing, and I think that is well judged, the sound being more grand and solemn, whatever it may lose in sweetness by the want of female tones.

I am glad you like the tragedy.² I was myself surprised to find the interest so kept up in the fourth and fifth acts. Of the third I never doubted, and quite agree with you that Herbert's speech is much the finest thing in the drama; I mean the most moving, or rather, the most in that style of the pathetic which one loves to dwell upon, though I acknowledge it is not so intensely dramatic as some parts of the fifth act especially.

As to the first, my only fear was that the action was too far advanced in it. I think the scene where the vagrant tells her false story has great merit; it is thoroughly natural and yet not commonplace nature.

Some of the sentiments which the development of Oswald's character required will, I fear, be complained of as too depraved for anything but biographical writing.

With affectionate remembrances to your husband and the girls,

Ever yours,

W. W.

¹ *Poetical Works*, Eversley edition, Vol. V, Book VII, l. 875.—Ed.

² *The Borderers*. — Ed.

DCCLXII

William Wordsworth to Serjeant Talfourd

17th April,

[Place and year not given, probably London, 1842.]

My dear Serjeant Talfourd,

You pay me far too great a compliment by the importance you attach to my being at home as an indispensable condition of your passing your vacation among our Lakes. My inclination last year was, and continues in this also, to visit Westmorland in the autumn, and to pass thence on to Italy with a view to completing my notice of that country¹ which the cholera prevented when I was at Homesworth with Robinson. . . . But there are still so many hindrances in the way that I cannot encourage the expectation of being able to get over them; so that I am at liberty to say that, for aught I can foresee, I shall be at Rydal the greatest part of the time you would have at your command. Nevertheless I cannot bind myself in the matter. I am dependent upon others in many ways; nor can I answer for what sort of inclination might spring up in me, or what necessities I might be under.

Be assured, however, your being in the country would be a strong inducement for my not yielding to a temptation to go from home. . . . Two houses are likely to be free at the time you mention. One is in the town, or rather village part of the town, of Ambleside, and is now occupied by my daughter and her husband, and his two daughters. . . .

Very sincerely, and with great esteem,

Your much obliged

W. WORDSWORTH.

¹ In a supplement to his poems, recording the tour of 1837. — Ed.

DCCLXIII

William Wordsworth to William Ewart Gladstone

RYDAL MOUNT, June 28, [1842.]

My dear Mr. Gladstone,

I left London for the North last Thursday week, and have been waiting for something definitive before I could with propriety write to you. Upon quitting you after our last interview I called upon Lord Lonsdale, and put Lord Monteagle's paper into his hands; his lordship was then inclined to forward it to Sir Robert Peel as soon as he should receive from me certain notices with which I wished it to be accompanied. These I could not accurately give till I came home. When I was about to forward them to Lord L., I was informed by his lordship that he had particular reasons for not moving in the matter for some little time, and expressed a hope that I should be satisfied with this decision. To this I replied that I submitted willingly to his judgment, and repeated what I had said to him in conversation; namely, that I never wished Sir Robert Peel should be formally solicited to grant me a Government pension, but merely that he should early be made acquainted with the fact that the annual sacrifice which I had made, upon his kind compliance with my desire that the office I held should be transferred to my son, amounted to upwards of £400, being more than half of my income. I was rather anxious that Sir Robert should know this as early as could be done with propriety, because the sum appropriated for the recompense of persons thought deserving is limited, and might altogether be forestalled. Further, as I have reached my seventy-third year, there is not much time to lose if I am thought worthy of being benefited.

Under these circumstances, dear sir, I leave it to your judgment how to proceed, being fully assured that nothing will be done by you without the most delicate well-weighed consideration of persons and circumstances.

Would you wish to have Lord Monteagle's paper, which has been returned to me by Lord Lonsdale? Pray present my compliments to Mrs. Gladstone, and believe me to be, my dear sir, Faithfully, your much obliged

WM. WORDSWORTH.

DCCLXIV

William Wordsworth to William Ewart Gladstone

July 11, 1842.

My dear Mr. Gladstone,

With many thanks for your kind letter I now enclose Lord Monteagle's letter, which I deferred doing in the hope — a faint one, I confess — that I might hear through Lord Lonsdale, or otherwise, something relative to the matter in which you have been so good as to take an interest.

It is apparent from the newspapers that the sum appropriated to that class of pensions has been exhausted during the course of last year, so that there is no surplus for the year ensuing; and this is, coupled with my advanced age, a strong reason why time should not be lost in reminding Sir Robert Peel of me. Nevertheless, after what has passed between Lord Lonsdale and myself, and which you are acquainted with, I do not like to resume the subject with his lordship. If, therefore, an occasion should occur which you think favourable, I leave it to your judgment to do as you think best, trusting that I shall stand free of any charge of indelicacy to Lord L., if I wish also to profit by

your friendly dispositions, as might be more likely to fall in your way from your relation to the present Government.

The movements of the Stamp Office have been rather slow in respect to the transfer of the stamps under my charge, so that I cannot yet regard my son as standing exactly in my late position; as soon as the head office has authorised me to do this, I shall think it my duty to thank Sir Robert Peel for his compliance with my request, I having as yet only left a card at his house when in town. . . .

Mrs. Wordsworth joins me in kind respects to yourself and Mrs. Gladstone. Believe me, my dear sir,

Faithfully, your much obliged

WM. WORDSWORTH.

DCCLXV

William Wordsworth to Henry Reed

RYDAL MOUNT, July 18, 1842.

My dear Sir,

. . . I have just resigned the office which to my own great convenience and advantage I have held for nearly thirty years, in favour of my younger son, who had acted under me for more than eleven years. By this step my small income has been reduced more than one-half, for there is no truth in what you may have seen in the newspapers that "I had retired upon a pension."

I lately received from Mr. Dickens a printed circular letter, in which he states that he presented through Mr. Clay a petition to Congress, signed by the whole body of American authors, praying for the establishment of an international law of copyright; and that to counteract this petition, as the circular states, a meeting was held at Boston at which a memorial against any change in the

existing state of things was agreed to with but one dissentient voice. This document—which was received—deliberately stated that if English authors were invested with any control over the republication of their own books, it would be no longer possible for American editors to alter and adapt them (as they do now) to the American taste.

Thus far the circular. And I ask you if it be possible that any person of the lowest degree of respectability in Boston could sign a document so monstrous in its spirit, and so injurious in its tendency?

. . . I returned to Rydal a month ago, after having been nearly six weeks in London. . . . The book trade is in a most depressed state, nothing but such books as have a connection with Theology, and the religious ferment that originated in Oxford, seeming to have the power of inducing people to part with their money for literature's sake. Nor is this much to be wondered at, for all ranks and classes are compelled by difficulties in the state of things to reduce their expenditure. . . .

Your much obliged friend,

WM. WORDSWORTH.

DCCLXVI

William Wordsworth to Henry Reed

RYDAL MOUNT, Sept. 14, 1842.

My dear Mr. Reed,

. . . A few days ago, after a very long interval, I returned to poetical composition; and my first employment was to write a couple of sonnets upon subjects recommended by you to be placed in the ecclesiastical series. They are upon the marriage ceremony. . . .

DCCLXVII

William Wordsworth to William Ewart Gladstone

13th October, 1842.

My dear Mr. Gladstone,

. . . If I should not succeed in obtaining what you have so kindly endeavoured to assist in procuring for me, I must be content ; and should the pension come, it would be welcome, both as a mark of public approbation and as preventing for the future the necessity of my looking more nearly to my expenditure than I have been accustomed to do. At all events I shall ever retain a grateful and most pleasing remembrance of your exertions to serve me upon this occasion ; nor can I fail to be much gratified by the recollection of Sir Robert Peel's favourable opinion of my claims. . . . Believe me, my dear Mr. Gladstone,

Faithfully, your much obliged

WM. WORDSWORTH.

DCCLXVIII

William Wordsworth to William Ewart Gladstone

RYDAL, Oct. 17, 1842.

My dear Mr. Gladstone,

I do not lose a moment in letting you know that Sir Robert Peel has made me an offer of a pension of £300 per annum for my life, and in terms which have above measure enhanced the satisfaction I feel upon the occasion. I will not run the risk of offending you by a renewal of thanks for your good offices in bringing this

about, but will content myself with breathing sincere and fervent good wishes for your welfare.

Believe me, my dear Mr. Gladstone,

Faithfully yours,

WM. WORDSWORTH.

DCCLXIX

*William Wordsworth to Elizabeth Barrett*¹

RYDAL MOUNT, Oct. 24th, 1842.

Dear Miss Barrett,

Through our common friend, Mr. Haydon, I have received a sonnet which his portrait of me suggested. I should have thanked you sooner for this expression of feeling towards myself, with which I am much gratified, but I have been absent from home and much occupied.

The conception of your sonnet is in full accordance with the painter's intended work, and the expression vigorous; yet the word "ebb," though I do not myself object to it, nor wish it altered, will, I fear, prove obscure to nine readers out of ten.

A vision free and noble, Haydon, hath thine art achieved.

Owing to the want of inflections in our language the construction here is obscure. Would it not be better thus?

I was going to write a small change in the order of the words, but I find it would not remove the objection. The verse, as I take it, would be somewhat clearer thus, if you could tolerate the redundant syllable:

By a vision free and noble, Haydon, is thine art achieved.²

¹ Afterwards Mrs. Browning. — Ed.

² Mrs. Browning altered this line in her published sonnet to read thus:

. . . A noble vision free
Our Haydon's hand has flung out from the mist. — Ed.

I had the gratification of receiving, a good while ago, two copies of a volume of your writing, which I have read with much pleasure, and beg that the thanks which I charged a friend to offer may be repeated to you now.

It grieved me much to hear from Mr. Kenyon, and now also from Mr. Haydon, that your health is so much deranged. But for that cause I should have presumed to call upon you when I was in London last spring. With every good wish, I remain, dear Miss Barrett,

Your much obliged

W. WORDSWORTH.

DCCLXX

John Wordsworth to Edward Moxon

BRIGHAM, COCKERMOUTH, Nov. 8th, 1842.

My dear Moxon,

. . . My father, who is here, wishes that the twelve sonnets, composed while the volume of sonnets was going through the press, should be added at the end of the fifth volume, together with a Latin translation of mine of the two *Odes to May*, and *The Somnambulist* (Latin title *Somnivaga*), to conclude with the enclosed Latin verses; all to be in small Latin print and not stereotyped. . . . I sent my translations a fortnight ago to my cousin at Harrow, telling him I thought you were in no immediate want of them, and asking him to correct both my blunders and those of your printers. . . .

DCCLXXI

William Wordsworth to Edward Moxon

[RYDAL MOUNT, 1842.]

Yesterday I saw Mr. Southey. He is better, but in my judgment it would be ruinous to Mr. Southey's health for him to undertake any task-work whatsoever, as nothing but absolute rest can bring him about.¹ Mrs. S. is convinced it would be very injurious to her husband, and proposed to him to put what he had already done into other hands. I think the same; for he has pretty confident hopes of being able soon to resume his labour. But what is the fact? He sits down to write a common letter, proceeds in the old way for a few lines, and then his nerves fall into disorder, and his head becomes quite confused. Common humanity, therefore, requires that he should be kept from work as much as possible. If Charles Lamb, dear man, had been alive, how gladly would he have done the work for you! I would also have done it to the best of my power, but my eyes will not allow it.

Ever faithfully and affectionately yours,

W. WORDSWORTH.

DCCLXXII

*William Wordsworth to John Taylor Coleridge*²

November 11, 1842.

. . . I was prepared by my daughter, Mrs. Quillinan, who is now with us, for the sad tidings your letter conveys.

¹ He had dissuaded Southey from trying to finish a work which he had promised Moxon to undertake. — Ed.

² The judge, John Taylor Coleridge (1790-1876). — Ed.

Your brother¹ will be a great loss to his profession, to the world, to his relatives and friends, and, above all, to his dear and excellent wife. In this hour we all feel most deeply for her, and indeed for you and his other near connections. Towards Sara I have much of the tenderness of a father, having had her so near us and so long under our eye while she was growing up, and afterwards when her circumstances brought her by necessity habitually to our thought. God will support her, for a more excellent creature is not to be found. Your poor brother ! I grieve indeed for his bodily sufferings, and pray that his patience may be equal to the bearing of them, and that he may be empowered sometimes to thank the Supreme Disposer of Events for the suffering he has inflicted.

This Dr. Arnold was enabled to do, but his trial was very short, though most severe while it lasted. Henry's is awfully prolonged. If it would be right to communicate to him our sympathy — and to say that he is in our prayers — let it be done, either through yourself, my dear friend, or in any other way you think best. . . .

DCCLXXIII

William Wordsworth to John Peace

RYDAL MOUNT, Dec. 12, 1842.

My dear Mr. Peace,

. . . Poor Mr. Wade ! From his own modest merits, his long connection with Mr. Coleridge, and my early Bristol remembrances, he was to me an interesting person. His desire to have my address must have risen,

¹ Henry Nelson Coleridge (1798–1843). — Ed.

I think, from a wish to communicate with me upon the subject of Mr. Allston's valuable portrait of Coleridge. Pray tell me what has, or is likely to, become of it. I care comparatively little about the matter, provided due care has been taken for its preservation, and in his native country. It would be a sad pity if the late owner's intention of sending it to America be fulfilled. It is the only likeness of the great original that ever gave me the least pleasure; and it is, in fact, most happily executed, as every one who has a distinct remembrance of what C. was at that time must with delight acknowledge, and would be glad to certify. . . .

Ever faithfully, your friend,

WM. WORDSWORTH.

DCCLXXIV

William Wordsworth to Edward Moxon

RYDAL MOUNT, Dec. 13th, 1842.

. . . Pray send us down a dozen copies of the new edition, and, if you have them, the like number of the *Yarrow* done up as those last sent, there being a great demand for them in this neighbourhood. I received from Mr. Quillinan your message this morning; the last part of the proofs was sent off before it arrived. . . . I have done all that can be done for you in Hartley's case, both directly, and through the medium of a common friend; but he now avoids us both, and tells every one who speaks on the subject to him that "he is going to send off the last remainder of the copy next day," and this has been the case for the last month or six weeks. It is, therefore, evident that you must trust nothing to him in future. He

cannot be relied on for unperformed work that is to be done in a limited time. This is a great pity, for both his genius and talents are admirable. As to poor dear Southey, there is yet no improvement in him to warrant a confident hope that he ever will be able to complete any of his unfinished works. He is prepared, I understand, to give up the continuation of the Admirals,¹ and I trust will do the same in respect to his engagement with you. In this distressing affair I can do no more than I have done. When you see Mr. Rogers, do not fail to remember us affectionately to him. And if dear Miss Lamb be well enough, let her be reminded of us when you see her. . . .

¹ Southey wrote *The Lives of the Admirals, or, the Naval History of England*, in five volumes (1833-1840). — Ed.

1843

DCCLXXV

Edward Quillinan to Correspondent Unknown

AMBLESIDE, March 22, 1843.

My dear Sir,

Mr. Southey is at last released. He died yesterday morning about half-past nine. Mr. T. Davies of Keswick, who wrote to Mrs. Wordsworth for Miss Southey, says :

KESWICK, Tuesday, half-past nine A.M.

Dear Madam,

I have only time to say that Miss Southey and myself have looked for one moment on her venerable father, who had departed only a few moments before. He looked very much like himself, and very placid. Nothing could have been more calm than his death. . . .

Your faithful servant,

THOS. DAVIES.

This is all we have yet heard. . . . Poor Kate Southey! her father will be nearer and more present to her in the churchyard at Keswick than he has been for the last three or four years, since the house where she was born and bred, and which was, during four or five and twenty years of her life, the happiest of homes, has been under the stepdameship of Mrs. Caroline Bowles.

Have you seen Mrs. Coleridge, Senr., lately? If you have not, and should be going that way, will you be good

enough to tell her that her son Hartley is at his home at the Nab, and quite well? As I was driving Mrs. Wordsworth and Miss Fenwick and Mrs. Quillinan to Grasmere on Monday I saw him. I know she has been anxious about him, because he is not a very good correspondent; he has been about lately on a visit to some friends at Bowness, and to another at Keswick. . . . But he is quite safe and well.

I have no courage to write to his mother as yet, so soon after the irreparable loss that her daughter has sustained in H. N. C., her gifted husband¹; and now she has lost her uncle Southey, who was so many years — all the years of her youth — more a father to her than an uncle. . . .

Yours most truly,

E. QUILLINAN.

DCCLXXVI

William Wordsworth to Christopher Wordsworth

RYDAL, March 22, 1843.

My dear Christopher,

The papers will have informed you, before you receive this, of poor dear Southey's decease. He died yesterday morning about nine o'clock. Some little time since he was seized with typhus fever, but he passed away without any outward signs of pain, as gently as possible. We are, of course, not without sadness upon the occasion, notwithstanding there has been, for years, cause why all who knew and loved him should wish for his deliverance.

¹ Henry Nelson Coleridge died Jan. 26, 1843. — Ed.

We have been reading, with very much pleasure, dear Charles's book¹ which he kindly sent us the other day.

My dear Christopher, your affectionate uncle and faithful friend,

W. WORDSWORTH.

DCCLXXVII

William Wordsworth to Edward Moxon

March 23, 1843.

Dear Mr. Moxon,

The task of correcting will be over instantly. To-morrow I expect the last of it, and heartily glad am I to be done. If I had foreseen the minute labour which I have had to undergo in correcting these poems, I never would have gone to press with them at all. I actually detest publication, and all that belongs to it; and if these poems do not benefit some minds here and there, I shall reproach myself with playing the fool at my time of life in such a way.

I have had much to commend in the care and attention of Messrs. Bradbury and Evans²; and pray tell them so from me if you should happen to see them.

[He again suggests that no copies of the volume be sent to any editors of magazines, or reviewers of periodicals, whatsoever.] I shall send one myself to Lockhart as a token of private friendship, but not to him as editor of the *Quarterly Review*. I make *no* exception in this matter.

¹ This was probably his *Catechetical Questions*, published in 1842. — Ed.

² The printers of his new volume. — Ed.

DCCLXXVIII

*William Wordsworth to Sir William M. Gomm*¹

RYDAL MOUNT, March 24, 1843.

My dear Sir William,

Nothing should have prevented my answering your kind letter from the Cape long ago, but the want of matter that seemed worth sending so far, unless I confined myself to what you must be well assured of, my sincere esteem and regard for yourself and Lady Gomm, and the expression of good wishes for your health and happiness. I am still in the same difficulty, but cannot defer writing longer, lest I should appear to myself unworthy of your friendship or respect.

You describe the beauties of Rio Janeiro in glowing colours, and your animated picture was rendered still more agreeable to me by the sight, which I had enjoyed a little before, of a panorama of the same scene, executed by a friend of mine, who in his youth studied at the Academy, with a view to practise painting as a profession. He was a very promising young artist, but having a brother a Brazilian merchant, he changed his purpose, and went to Rio, where he resided many years and made a little fortune, which enabled him to purchase and build in Cumberland, where I saw his splendid picture of that magnificent region. What an intricacy of waters! and what boldness and fantastic variety in the mountains! I suppose, taking the region as a whole, it is scarcely surpassed anywhere.

If the different quarters of the globe should ever become subject to one empire, Rio ought to be the metropolis; it

¹ Afterwards commander-in-chief in India. — Ed.

is so favoured in every respect, and so admirably placed for intercourse with all the countries of the earth. Your approach to the Cape was under awful circumstances, and, with three great wrecks strewn along the coast of the bay, Lady Gomm's spirit and fortitude, as described by you, are worthy of all admiration, and I am sure she will sympathise with the verses I send, written to commemorate a noble exploit of one of her sex. The inhumanity with which the shipwrecked were lately treated upon the French coast impelled me to place in contrast the conduct of an English woman and her parents under like circumstances, as it occurred some years ago. Almost immediately after I had composed my tribute to the memory of Grace Darling, I learned that both the Queen and Queen Dowager had subscribed towards the erection of a monument to record her heroism, upon the spot that witnessed it.

Of public news I say nothing, as you will hear everything from quarters more worthy of attention. I hope all goes on to your satisfaction — mainly so at least — in your new government; and that the disposition which you will have taken with you to benefit the people under your rule has not been, and is not likely to be, frustrated in any vexatious or painful degree.

Yesterday I went over to Keswick to attend the funeral of my excellent friend, Mr. Southey. His genius and abilities are well known to the world, and he was greatly valued for his generous disposition and moral excellence. His illness was long and afflicting; his mind almost extinguished years before the breath departed. Mr. Rogers I have not been in communication with since I saw you in London, but be assured I shall bear in memory your message, and deliver it, if he and I live to meet again.

And now, my dear Sir William, repeating the best good wishes of Mrs. Wordsworth and myself for you and Lady Gomm, and your safe return to your own country, I remain, in the hope of hearing from you again,

Most faithfully, your much obliged

W. WORDSWORTH.

My nephew¹ is still in the Ionian Islands.

DCCLXXIX

Edward Quillinan to Correspondent Unknown

AMBLESIDE, March 25, 1843.

My dear Sir,

On Saturday I drove Mr. Wordsworth early over to Keswick that he and I might attend the funeral of Mr. Southey, who was buried in the Crosthwaite churchyard there at 11 A.M. It was very affecting to see Kate Southey (with her brother Cuthbert, and brother-in-law Herbert Hill) at her father's grave, as the coffin was lowered into it. She looked as if she yearned to be there too. Mr. Martin was present, but we did not see him. Mrs. Southey was not there. . . . Poor Kate says that she has now got her father back again. . . . We met John Wordsworth of Brigham and his little boy William, who is Southey's godson. . . .

Yours faithfully,

E. W. Q.

¹ Christopher Wordsworth. — Ed.

DCCLXXX

William Wordsworth to Henry Reed

RYDAL MOUNT, March 27, 1843.

. . . The account you give of my old friend Mr. Allston — for so I will presume to call him — was very gratifying to me. As I believe you know, we were made acquainted through Mr. Coleridge, who had lived in much intimacy with Mr. Allston at Rome. There is a most excellent portrait of Coleridge by Allston, about which I am very anxious, not knowing what will become of it, the late owner, Mr. Wade—for whom it was painted—being dead. My wish was, as I expressed to him a year and a half ago, that he should bequeath the portrait to Mr. Coleridge's only daughter for her life, to go after her day to the Fitzwilliam Museum at Cambridge, or the College in that University where he was educated. But I have no knowledge that he acted upon this advice. His own inclination was to send the picture to the painter. I respected that inclination, and was well aware that Mr. Allston would prize it much for his deceased friend Coleridge's sake. I know also that Mr. Coleridge had many ardent admirers in America, nevertheless I could not suppress a wish that it should remain in England, it is so admirable a likeness of what that great and good man then was both as to person, feature, air, and character. Moreover, though there are several pictures of him in existence, and one by an artist eminent in his day, viz. Northcote, there is not one in the least to be compared to this by Mr. Allston.¹ . . .

¹ In a letter, dated June 13, 1843,—probably the last he ever wrote,—Allston said of this portrait to Professor Reed, "So far as I can judge of my own production the likeness is a true one, but it

You give me pleasure by the interest you take in the various passages in which I speak of the poets, my contemporaries who are no more. Dear Southey, one of the most eminent, is just added to the list a few days ago. I went over to Keswick to attend his remains to their last earthly abode. For upwards of a year and a half his powers of recognition — except very rarely, and but for a moment — have been all but extinct. His bodily health was grievously impaired, and his medical attendant says that he must have died long since but for the very great strength of his natural constitution. As to his literary remains, they must be very considerable, but, except his epistolary correspondence, more or less unfinished. His letters cannot but be very numerous, and, if carefully collected, and judiciously selected, will, I doubt not, add greatly to his reputation. He had a fine talent for that species of composition, and took much delight in throwing off his mind in that way. Mr. Taylor, the dramatic author, is his literary executor.

. . . I will add a few words upon the wish you express that I would pay a tribute to the English poets of past ages, who never had the fame they are entitled to, and have long been almost entirely neglected. Had this been suggested to me earlier in life, or had it come into my

is Coleridge in repose; and though not unstirred by the perpetual grand swell of his ever working intellect, and shadowing forth something of the deep philosopher, it is not Coleridge in his highest mood, the poetic state. When in that state no face that I ever saw was like to his. It seemed almost *spirit made visible*, without a shadow of the physical upon it. Could I then have fixed it on canvas! but it was beyond the reach of my art. He was the greatest man I have known, and one of the best; as his nephew, Henry Nelson, most truly said, "a thousand times more sinned against than sinning." — Ed.

thoughts, the thing in all probability would have been done. At present I cannot hope it will, but it may afford you some satisfaction to be told that in the MS. poem upon my poetic education there is a whole book of about six hundred lines upon my obligation to writers of imagination, and chiefly the poets, though I have not expressly named those to whom you allude and for whom and many others of their age I have a high respect. The character of the schoolmaster, about whom you inquire, had, like the Wanderer in *The Excursion*, a solid foundation in fact and reality, but, like him, it was also in some degree a composition. I will not, and need not, call it an invention—it was no such thing; but were I to enter into details, I fear it would impair the effect of the whole upon your mind, nor could I do it at all to my own satisfaction. I send you, according to your wish, the additions to the ecclesiastical sonnets, and also the last poem from my pen. I threw it off two or three weeks ago, being in a great measure impelled to it by the desire I felt to do justice to the memory of a heroine, whose conduct presented, some time ago, a striking contrast to the inhumanity with which our countrymen shipwrecked lately upon the French coast have been treated.

Ever most faithfully yours,

WM. WORDSWORTH.

I must request that *Grace Darling* may not be reprinted.

DCCLXXXI

William Wordsworth to the Earl De La Warr

RYDAL MOUNT, AMBLESIDE, April 1, 1843.

My Lord,

The recommendation made by your lordship to the Queen, and graciously approved by her Majesty, that the vacant office of poet laureate should be offered to me, affords me high gratification. Sincerely am I sensible of this honour ; and let me be permitted to add that the being deemed worthy to succeed my lamented and revered friend, Mr. Southey, enhances the pleasure I receive upon this occasion.

The appointment, I feel, however, imposes duties which, far advanced in life as I am, I cannot venture to undertake ; and I must therefore beg leave to decline the acceptance of an offer, that I shall always remember with no unbecoming pride.

Her Majesty will not, I trust, disapprove of a determination forced upon me by reflections which it is impossible for me to set aside.

Deeply feeling the distinction conferred upon me, and grateful for the terms in which your lordship has made the communication, I have the honour to be,

Your lordship's most obedient humble servant,

W. WORDSWORTH.

DCCLXXXII

William Wordsworth to Lady Frederick Bentinck

[April 1, 1843.]

. . . The Lord Chamberlain, in terms the most honourable, has, with the Queen's approbation, offered me the vacant laureateship. Had I been several years younger I should have accepted the office with pride and pleasure; but on Friday I shall enter, God willing, my seventy-fourth year, and on account of so advanced an age I begged permission to decline it, not venturing to undertake its duties. For though, as you are aware, the formal task-work of New Year and Birthday Odes was abolished, when the appointment was given to Mr. Southey, he still considered himself obliged in conscience to produce, and did produce, verses — some of very great merit — upon important public occasions. He failed to do so upon the Queen's Coronation, and I know that this omission caused him no little uneasiness. The same might happen to myself upon some important occasion, and I should be uneasy under the possibility; I hope, therefore, that neither you nor Lord Lonsdale, nor any of my friends, will blame me for what I have done.

I was slow to send copies of *Grace Darling* about, except to female friends, lest I should seem to attach too much importance to the production, though it was on a subject which interested the whole nation. But as the verses seem to have given general pleasure, I now venture to send the enclosed copies, one for Mr. Colvill, and the other for my old friend Mr. O'Callaghan, begging that you would present them at your own convenience. With

the best of good wishes, and every kind and respectful remembrance to Lord Lonsdale, who we are happy to learn is doing so well, and also not forgetting Miss Thompson, I remain, dear Lady Frederick,

Most faithfully and affectionately yours,

WM. WORDSWORTH.

DCCLXXXIII

William Wordsworth to Correspondent Unknown

RYDAL MOUNT, April 1, 1843.

Dear Sir,

. . . As I advance in life I feel myself more and more incapable of doing justice to the attempts of young authors. The taste and judgment of an old man have too little of aptitude and flexibility for new things; and I am thoroughly convinced that a young writer cannot do worse than lean upon a veteran. It was not my own habit to look out for such guidance. I trusted to myself, and to the principles of criticism which I drew from the practice of the great poets, and not from any observations made upon their works by professed censors. As you are so intimately acquainted with my poems, and as no change has taken place in my manner for the last forty-five years, you will not be at a loss to gather from them upon what principles I write, and what accordingly is likely to be my judgment of your own performances, either as to subject or style.

I remain, my dear sir,

Faithfully, your obliged

WM. WORDSWORTH.

DCCLXXXIV

William Wordsworth to the Earl De La Warr

RYDAL MOUNT, AMBLESIDE, April 4, 1843.

My Lord,

Being assured by your lordship's letter and by one from Sir Robert Peel, both received this day, that the appointment to the laureateship is to be considered merely honorary, the apprehensions which at first compelled me to decline accepting the offer of that appointment are entirely removed.

Sir Robert Peel has also done me the honour of uniting his wish with that which your lordship has urged in a manner most gratifying to my feelings; so that, under these circumstances—and sanctioned as the recommendation has been by her Majesty's gracious approval—it is with unalloyed pleasure that I accept this high distinction.

I have the honour to be, most gratefully,

Your lordship's obedient humble servant,

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH.

DCCLXXXV

William Wordsworth to Sir Robert Peel

RYDAL MOUNT, AMBLESIDE, April 4, 1843.

Dear Sir Robert,

Having since my first acquaintance with Horace borne in mind the charge which he tells us frequently thrilled his ear,

Solve senescentem maturè sanus equum, ne
Peccet ad extremum,¹

¹ *Epistolæ*, I, i. 8, 9. — Ed.

I could not but be deterred from incurring responsibilities which I might not prove equal to at so late a period of life ; but as my mind has been entirely set at ease by the very kind and most gratifying letter with which you have honoured me, and by a second communication from the Lord Chamberlain to the same effect, and in a like spirit, I have accepted with unqualified pleasure a distinction sanctioned by her Majesty, and which expresses, upon authority entitled to the highest respect, a sense of the national importance of poetic literature, and so favourable an opinion of the success with which it has been cultivated by one, who, after this additional mark of your esteem, cannot refrain from again assuring you how deeply sensible he is of the many and great obligations he owes to your goodness, and who has the honour to be, dear Sir Robert,

Most faithfully, your humble servant,

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH.

DCCLXXXVI

William Wordsworth to William Rowan Hamilton

[April, 1843.]

. . . The laureateship was offered to me in most flattering terms by the Lord Chamberlain, of course with the approbation of the Queen ; but I declined it on account of my advanced age. I then received a second letter from his lordship, urging my acceptance of it, and assuring me that it was intended merely as an honorary distinction for the past, without the smallest reference to any service to be attached to it. From Sir Robert Peel I had also a letter to the same effect, and the substance and manner

of both were such that if I had still rejected the offer, I should have been little at peace with my own mind.

The attack upon W. S. L. to which you allude was written by my son-in-law, but without any sanction from me, much less encouragement. In fact, I knew nothing about it, or the preceding article of Landor that had called it forth, till after Mr. Quillinan's had appeared. He knew very well that I should have disapproved of his condescending to notice it. . . .

DCCLXXXVII

William Wordsworth to Joseph Cottle

RYDAL MOUNT, April 22d, 1843.

[Asks him to send any letters of Southey's which he may think worthy of publication to either of his literary executors, Henry Taylor or Southey's brother, the Dr. ; and to send on his own letter to Mr. Pearce for the same purpose.]

DCCLXXXVIII

William Wordsworth to John Taylor Coleridge

RYDAL MOUNT, 15th May, 1843.

My dear Mr. Justice Coleridge,

Having learned from the newspapers that you have resumed your official duties, I do not scruple to break in upon you for a moment, though it be only to assure you of what you and Lady Coleridge must be well aware,—my sincere sympathy with you both in your late affliction. In this feeling Mrs. Wordsworth deeply shares, and unites

with me in prayer to the Father of Mercy that you may bear with resignation this, and the other losses of beloved kindred, to which by his will you have so recently in succession been subjected. Our excellent friend Mrs. Arnold was so good as to show me a letter written to her by yourself immediately after your dear son had been taken from you. A blessed state of mind did these few words indicate ; and I trust that, through the grace of God, you have been able to maintain it. May the rest of your children be preserved to each other and to their parents. I remain,

Yours most faithfully,

WM. WORDSWORTH.

DCCLXXXIX

William Wordsworth to John Taylor Coleridge

RYDAL MOUNT, June 27, 1843.

. . . In respect to Mr. Southey's monument, it was not intended that it should interfere in the least with any testimony that might be paid to his memory at Westminster Abbey. But as he had chosen the vale of Keswick for his residence, and had lived there for forty years or upwards, some of the neighbouring gentry (with whom I conversed) were anxious to erect a tablet in the Church, to express their admiration for the life which he had led, and their veneration for his memory. It was accordingly intended, and I believe still is, that the subscriptions for this purpose should not extend beyond the surrounding district, which he had so long benefited and honoured by his presence. . . . Agreeing altogether with you that monuments to the dead, even in the cases of eminent men, are more

touching when connected with local remembrances, I could still wish that Sir R. Inglis and Mr. Wynne would persist in the plan of having a memorial placed in Westminster Abbey. In addition to Southey's claim to be so commemorated for his genius and attainments, his known attachment to the Anglican Church, and the ability with which he supported it by his writings, and his having been educated in the neighbouring school of Westminster, give a special propriety to his being included amongst the illustrious dead who are called to remembrance in that beautiful and sacred edifice, though their remains have not been deposited there. . . .

DCCXC

Edward Quillinan to Henry Crabb Robinson

BELLE ISLE, WINDERMERE, July 23d, 1843.

. . . Miss Fenwick is more than a favourite with Mr. and Mrs. Wordsworth, and I do not think that they can now live in perfect ease without her. No wonder. She is a *trump*. There is more solid sense in union with genuine goodness in her than goes to the composition of any hundred and fifty good and sensible persons of everyday occurrence. . . . Mr. Wordsworth ought to have been at Buckingham Palace, at the Queen's ball, for which he received a formal invitation. He pleaded, as an apology for non-attendance, the non-arrival of the invitation in time. He dated his answer from this place, "The Island, Windermere," and that would explain the impossibility; for the notice was the shortest possible, even if it had been received by first post. But a man in his seventy-fourth year would, I suppose, be excused by Royalty

for not travelling three hundred miles to attend a dance, even if a longer notice had been given ; though probably Mr. Wordsworth would have gone, had he had a fortnight to think of it, because the laureate must pay his personal respects to the Queen sooner or later, and the sooner the better, he thinks.

I have been lately reading old New Year and Birthday Odes, and nothing struck me so disagreeably as the *idolatry*. The royal personage is not panegyrised, but idealised ; the monarch is not a king, but a god. It has occurred to me that Mr. Wordsworth may, in his own grand way, compose a hymn to or on the King of kings, in rhymed or blank verse, invoking a blessing on the Queen and Country, or giving thanks for blessings vouchsafed and perils averted. This would be a new mode of dealing with the office of laureate, and would come with dignity and propriety, I think, from a seer of Wordsworth's age and character. I told him so, and he made no observation. I therefore think it likely that he may consider the suggestion, but certainly he will not, if he hears that anything of that sort is expected from him. So do not mention it. . . . He may do nothing in any case.

DCCXCI

William Wordsworth to Henry Reed

RYDAL MOUNT, August 2, 1843.

My dear Mr. Reed,

. . . This spring I have not left home for London or anywhere else, and during the progress of it and the summer I have had much pleasure in noting the flowers and blossoms, as they appeared and disappeared successively, an occupation from which, at least with reference

to my own grounds, a residence in town for the three foregoing spring seasons cut me off. Though my health continues, thank God, to be very good and I am as active as most men of my age, my strength for very long walks among the mountains is of course diminishing ; but weak or strong in body, I shall ever remain, in heart and mind,

Your friend,

WM. WORDSWORTH.

P.S. — Mr. Southey's literary executors are making a collection of his letters, which will prove highly interesting to the public, they are so gracefully and feelingly written.

DCCXCII

Edward Quillinan to Henry Crabb Robinson

THE ISLAND, WINDERMERE, NEAR KENDAL,
August 25th, 1843.

Your letter directed to Ambleside would have come to me through Bowness to-day, had I not chanced to pass through Ambleside last evening and to call at Mrs. Nicholson's on my way to Rydal with my daughter and a bride and bridegroom (who were married only a week ago, near Dover, and have come all this way on purpose to see us — not the lakes — previous to their departure for India). They start for Marseilles next week, go by steam to Alexandria, traverse the desert, etc. The bride is a very handsome person of twenty. Well, I rode them yesterday to the Waterhead ; walked then to Rydal, getting your letter by the way, and read your epistle, every

word of it, to Mr. and Mrs. Wordsworth, who were much pleased by the first part and not a little entertained with most of the rest. Your friend, Mr. Paynter, I once breakfasted with at your chambers in the Temple.

Of Mr. Faber we have heard a good deal. He has written several times to Miss Fenwick and the Benson-Harrisons; and the other day came a long yarn to Mr. Carr, in Italian, from Naples, which Faber abuses as utterly uninteresting and detestable in climate, and far over-rated even as to beauty and position, the bay being a very fair bay, but nothing incomparable! He sighs for his *cara Roma*, which he left by medical advice, and so changed climate for the worse. From his *cara Roma* the first letter he sent to Miss Fenwick was dated Rome, and that one word was all the mention made of Rome; not another allusion to the Eternal City; it might as well have been penned from Geneva. But it was full of himself, and his religious enthusiasm for his parish in England. However, he afterwards got much among the cardinals, and seems to have been all but converted to the true faith. This between ourselves, and more of this hereafter; but he has rather retrograded; the devil pulled him back a step or two from the pope, and he stands again on the old new ground, if a man can be said to stand on a quicksand. What say you, who stand on the adamantine rock on the farther shore, the indisputable territory of his Satanic Majesty? There is a little Popery for you, to pay you off for your heretical irreverence towards the infallible Pontiff.

What do you mean by my fierce mention of Macaulay, you cross-examiner of gentleness! you advocate of paradox! you Gordian-knotter of simplicities! you puzzler of innocence! Or does my protesting against the moral

character of Pope being placed in invidious comparison with Addison's imply "hate of every one who differs in opinion," etc. O ye powers of justice, listen to this cruel libeller of my patient placable spirit. I forgive him, but you cannot! Your thunderbolts will avenge me. I will not enter upon the comparative moral worth of Pope and Addison. It is the very comparison by Mr. Macaulay at this time of day, the begging of so ugly a question, the lifting the skirts of one of his literary fathers, that I object to; that I should consider even odious, if my tender heart could, egg-like, be boiled hard. I will not reveal to you, for you could not comprehend, my idolatry of Pope from my boyhood, I might almost say from infancy; for the first book that ever threw me into a rapture of delight was Pope's *Iliad*. I loved the "Little Nightingale" and the "Great Alexander" from that day, and made everything that concerned him my study; and I have never learned to unlove him, though there is not, I believe, any published particular of his history, whether discussed by friend or foe, that I have not read. My love of Pope was so notorious among my schoolfellows that when any malicious boy chose to put me into a fever for fun, he would point his pop-gun at Pope. When Lisle Bowles made money of Pope's brains by publishing (in my boyhood) an edition of him, in which he had the face to deny that Pope was a poet of a high order, I thought the same Lisle a mean coxcomb. I had been almost as much dissatisfied with Joseph Wharton for the first volume of his *Essay*; but Dr. Joe's feeble elegance as a versifier was in some sense explanatory of his principles of taste, as well as of the mediocrity of his own talents (for poetry). I had written "genius," but thumbed it out, for he had none.

My admiration for Pope — the man, the son, the friend, as well as the poet — in no degree diminished as I grew older, and is as vivid now as ever. The living presence of Mr. Rogers at his breakfast-table hardly more charms me than the Roubillac bust, which is one of his precious *Lares urbani*. Eight or nine and twenty years ago, at Malvern, I used often to visit the house of Sir Thomas Plomer's widow, in her absence, solely to gaze on an excellent original oil-portrait of Pope that hung in her drawing-room. Little more than two years since, on the day before my marriage, the late Bishop Baynes, at Prior Park, pleased me much by his civilities, but most by showing me the little pencil sketch (often engraved) taken by stealth in that very house when it was Allen's, as Pope was standing, talking carelessly, unconscious of the virtue that was stolen from him to make a little bit of paper a venerated relic. Pope, sir, taught me to read Montaigne, at an age when I found much of the matter far more difficult to my comprehension than this antiquated vehicle. (By-the-bye, that need not deter any Englishman from making intimate acquaintance with him, while there exists so capital a translation as Cotton's, with copious notes.) Pope also taught me to read Chaucer, and *The Faerie Queene*, not in his juvenile imitations, with which I was acquainted in my youth, and would gladly cut out now. All this, which I know is utterly unimportant to any one but myself, I inflict upon your notice that you may, in some slight measure, understand why I ought to hate Macaulay, or any flippant, flashy, clever fellow who demeans his abilities to the service of the dunces in their war against Pope. . . .

Pope's character is as sacred to my estimation as the best and the wholesomest fruit of his genius; both his

moral worth and literary merit are bright enough to make me blink at his faults. His nature was generous. If through "that long disease, his life" he was often more impatient of flies than a philosophical Brahmin, who can wonder if his high-bred Pegasus was impatient of them too, and flapped them down with his tail by dozens?

What do you think his tail was given him for, if not to flap away the flies? That so sweet a bee as Addison, a honey-maker — whose Hybla murmurs of music fit for the gods — should have come in for a whisk of that formidable tail is lamentable; but why, then, did he insinuate his subtle sting into the fine flank of the soaring steed? "If you scratch not the Pope, you may fairly and brawly claw brother Addison, statesman Macaulay." (By-the-bye, though there cannot be a greater contrast in style than between Macaulay's and Addison's — for Mr. Macaulay's is fussy and ambitious — I did, and do, very much admire his notice of the life of Lord Clive. He put more true and genuine stuff, I think, into these few pages than was contained in the whole work that suggested the essay.)

I cut out of the *John Bull* a letter which I have this moment fallen upon by chance. On Thursday last two letters came, the first alarming Mr. and Mrs. Wordsworth, who were with us, as to the state of Miss Hutchinson, the second a summons for Dora. These disconcerted our plan of going to the Duddon, etc. Professor Wilson and his daughter Miss Wilson dined with us on that day, and we found them very agreeable company; but the cheerfulness of the Professor, I fear, is rather assumed. I understand that he has never recovered the shock of his wife's death. He was in this country a few days only. He is no Bacchanalian now, if he ever were so. He drinks no wine, nor spirits, nor even beer; nothing but water, or

tea, or coffee. Both Mr. and Mrs. Wordsworth were very glad to meet so old a friend. Mrs. Wordsworth has always been an admirer and lover of Wilson. Don't be jealous; her husband is not. On Friday Mr. Wordsworth accompanied Dora and me by water to Low Wood, whence Dora went to Rydal in a car, and thence to Brigham with James, in her father's phaeton. She went to take care of her brother's children, according to promise, while John and his wife are absent, or such part of that time as may be arranged. Very inconvenient and desolate for me is her absence, but it was a duty that called her away. Had she been here, I should have thought I could not find time to write to you such lengthy prose. . . .

DCCXCIII

Edward Quillinan to Henry Crabb Robinson

THE ISLAND, WINDERMERE,
Sept. 1st, 1843.

. . . You may propose a Welsh tour to Mr. Wordsworth. He is so fond of travelling with you that I dare say, once at Brinsop,¹ he would say "Done!" to your offer. Dora is at Rydal now. Jemima, Rotha, and I go on Saturday next, and very reluctantly shall I leave this *perfect* island. I mean this island that has no imperfections about, or in it, but ourselves. Even Rydal Mount is not so charming a "locality," as the Yankees say; and the house here is excellent, a mansion. . . .

¹ The home of Wordsworth's brother-in-law, Mr. Hutchinson.—Ed.

DCCXCIV

William Wordsworth to Richard Henry Dana

RYDAL MOUNT, AMBLESIDE,
October, 1843.

I have heard much of Mr. Allston from Mr. Coleridge, and I should have thought it a high privilege to cultivate his friendship had opportunity allowed.

Mr. Coleridge had lived on terms of intimacy with him at Rome. They returned from Italy about the same time, and it was in London, there only, that I had the pleasure of seeing Mr. Allston at his own lodgings.

He was well known, both through Coleridge and through his own genius, to one of my most intimate friends, Sir George Beaumont, who always passed the spring season in London.

Coleridge and he took great delight in referring to Mr. Allston's observations upon Art, and the great masters they had seen together in Rome, and the delight was no doubt mutual from the commencement of their acquaintance.

By such reports of his conversation and corresponding accounts of his noble qualities of heart and temper I was led to admire, and with truth I may say to love, Mr. Allston before I had seen him or any of his works. But opportunities did not favour me. His short stay in London occasioned me much regret, less on account of being cut off from his society (though to that I was anything but indifferent) than because I felt strongly that his works would be duly appreciated in England.

His own country had a strong claim on his talents, as it had upon his affections; nevertheless, carefully as he

had observed the works of the old masters, and deeply as he had studied them, and vivid as were his impressions of their excellence, I could not but fear that when by residence in America he was removed from the sight of them, his genius — great as it was — might suffer, and his works fall more or less into mannerism. There was such high promise in the few works of his pencil which I had the opportunity of seeing that they stood, in my estimation, much above those of any other artist of his day. They indicated a decided power of higher conceptions, and his skill in dealing with the material of art struck me as far beyond that of any other painter of his time. It was truly, as Coleridge used to say, “coloring, and not color.”

Since Mr. Allston went home I have had short letters from him frequently, introducing his American acquaintances; and friendly messages have often passed between us, which I am certain were mutually acceptable.

Your account of his last moments affected me deeply. I thank you sincerely for it. Much do I regret that it is not in my power to dwell more upon particulars, but after such a lapse of time I could not venture to attempt it, and I beg of you to take in good part the scanty tribute to the memory of a great man whom I highly honoured.

Sincerely yours,

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH.

DCCXCV

William Wordsworth to Henry Reed

RYDAL MOUNT, NOV. 10, 1843.

My dear Mr. Reed,

. . . Of the ability of the State of Pennsylvania to discharge its obligations there can be no doubt. As Mr. Webster has told them, theirs is one of the richest countries in the world, so that the whole resolves itself into a question of morality. An immense majority of the educated inhabitants desire nothing more earnestly than that the debt should be provided for ; but their opinion is overborne by the sordid mass, which will always have a considerable influence over a community whose institutions are so democratic as yours are. Were it not for this evil, I should not have a shadow of doubt as to the issue. At present, I own I have.

Mr. Webster has spoken manfully, but why does he say so much about the great foreign capitalists, without a word about the very many who in humble life are stripped of their comforts, and even brought to want by these defalcations? It is a sad return for the confidence they placed in the good faith of their transatlantic brethren. I do not mean to insinuate that the poor creditor should be paid at the expense of the rich, far from it, but it is for that portion of the sufferers that I chiefly grieve ; and I mourn even still more for the disgrace brought upon, and the discouragement given to, the self-government of nations by the spread of the suffrage among the people. For I will not conceal from you that, as far as the people are capable of governing themselves, I am a democrat.

I have written to two of Mr. Allston's friends, Mr. Waterston — who wrote to me immediately upon his death

—and to his brother-in-law also, to whom I should have replied earlier, but that I was discouraged by the expectations which he entertained that I had much to say of his lamented friend. The fact is, as I have told him, that my direct personal knowledge of Mr. Allston was very slight. I do not think that I ever saw him more than half a dozen times at the utmost, and that was in one place, and long ago. But I had heard so much of his character from Mr. Coleridge that I was prepared to set a high value upon his acquaintance, and all that I did see of him personally strengthened my regret that he remained so short a time among us in England. Your extract from his letter interested me much.

Immediately upon the receipt of yours I wrote to a friend at Bristol to do what could be done for the fulfilment of Mr. Allston's, and my own, wishes in respect to the portrait. To that letter I have not yet received an answer. The portrait belongs, I believe, to a nephew, or niece, of the late Mr. Wade, for whom it was painted.

I thank you for your criticism upon the sonnet. Let it be altered as you suggest,

For rightly were they taught, etc.

This is a dry letter. Believe me to remain,

Ever truly and faithfully yours,

WM. WORDSWORTH.

DCCXCVI

William Wordsworth to Joseph Cottle

Nov. 24, 1843.

My dear Mr. Cottle,

. . . You have treated the momentous subject of socinianism in a masterly manner, which is entirely and absolutely convincing.¹

Believe me to remain, my good old friend, with great respect,

Faithfully yours,

WM. WORDSWORTH.

DCCXCVII

William Wordsworth to John Taylor Coleridge

Dec. 2, 1843.

My dear Mr. Justice Coleridge,

Pray accept my thanks for the pains you have taken with the Inscription and excuse the few words I shall have to say upon your remarks.

There are *two* lakes in the vale of Keswick: both of which, along with the lateral vale of Newlands immediately opposite Southey's study window, will be included in the words, "Ye vales and hills," by every one who is familiar with the neighbourhood.

I quite agree with you that the construction of the lines that particularise his² writings is rendered awkward by so many participles passive, and the more so on account of the transitive verb "informed." One of these participles

¹ Cottle's work was *Songs on Socinianism*. — Ed.

² Southey's. — Ed.

may be got rid of, and I think a better couplet produced, by this alteration :

Or judgments sanctioned in the patriot's mind
By reverence for the rights of all mankind.

As I have entered into particulars of Southey's writings, and they are so various, I thought his historic works ought by no means to be omitted, and therefore, though unwilling to lengthen the epitaph, I added the following :

Labours of his own,
Whether he traced historic truth with zeal
For the State's guidance or the Church's weal,
Or Fancy, disciplined by studious art,
Informed his pen, or wisdom of the heart,
Or judgments sanctioned in the patriot's mind
By reverence for the rights of all mankind.

I do not feel with you in respect to the word "so" — it refers of course to the preceding line, and as the reference is to fireside feelings and intimate friends, there appears to me a propriety in an expression inclining to the colloquial. The couplet was the dictate of my own feelings, and the construction is accordingly broken and rather dramatic.

But too much of this. If you have any objection to the couplet as altered be so kind as to let me know. If not, on no account trouble yourself to answer this letter.

I object to "prematurely," as you do. I used the word with reference to that decay of faculties which is not uncommon in advanced life, and which often leads to dotage ; but the word must not be retained.

We regret much to hear that Lady Coleridge is unwell. Pray present to her our best wishes.

What could induce the Bishop of London to forbid the choral service at St. Mark's? It was an execution, I understand, above all praise.

Ever most faithfully yours,

WM. WORDSWORTH.

DCCXCVIII

William Wordsworth to Edward Moxon

4th December, 1843.

. . . Mr. Gough requested of me permission to make a selection¹ mainly of subjects relating to this county, as it was principally intended for circulation among his own scholars. He was then master of St. Bees' School, as he is now of the Free School of Carlisle. I consented without reluctance, subject to your permission.

As there is not a word from *The Excursion*, nor *The White Doe*, nor *Peter Bell*, nor any of the Continental Poems, or the Sonnets, I hope the publication will not hurt our sale.

DCCXCIX

William Wordsworth to Edward Moxon

December, 1843.

I have written this morning to a lady² through whom Chambers applied to me for permission to make extracts from my poems for his "sicky-paddy,"³ as Coleridge used to call that class of publication. I gave him leave. . . .

¹ From his poems. The book was called *Select Pieces from the Poems of William Wordsworth*, and was dedicated to "Her most sacred Majesty, Victoria." — Ed. ² It was Mrs. Fletcher. — Ed.

³ Chambers's *Encyclopædia of English Literature*. — Ed.

DCCC

Edward Quillinan to Henry Crabb Robinson

AMBLESIDE, Saturday night, Dec. 9, 1843.

. . . I have been dining at Rydal, after walking about a considerable part of the morning, through the waters and the mists, with the bard, who seems to defy all weathers, and who called this "a beautiful, soft, solemn day"; and so it was, though somewhat insidiously soft, for a mackintosh was hardly proof against its insinuations. He was in great force and great vigour of mind. He has just completed an epitaph on Southey, written at the request of a committee at Keswick for Crosthwaite Church. I think it will please you.

They (all the Rydalites — Mr. Wordsworth, Mrs. Wordsworth, and Miss Fenwick) have been quite charmed, affected, and instructed by the invalid's volume, sent down by Moxon, who kept his secret like a man. But a woman found it out, for all that — found you out, *Mr. Slyboots!* Mrs. Wordsworth, after a few pages were read, at once pronounced it to be Miss Martineau's production, and concluded that you knew all about it, and caused it to be sent hither. In some of its most eloquent parts it stops short of our wishes and expectations; but they all agree that it is a rare book, doing honour to the head and heart of your able and interesting friend. Mr. Wordsworth praised it with more unreserve — I may say with more earnestness — than is usual with him. The serene and heavenly-minded Miss Fenwick was prodigal in her admiration. But Mrs. Wordsworth's was the crowning praise. She said — and you know how she would say it — "I wish I had read such a book as that years ago!"

I ought to add that they had not finished the volume — had only got about half through it — as many interruptions occur, and they like to read it together ; one, of course, reading aloud to the rest. It is a genuine and touching series of meditations by an invalid, not sick in mind or heart ; and such, they doubt not, they will find it to the end. When I said all the Rydalites, I ought to have excepted poor dear Miss Wordsworth, who could not bear sustained attention to any book, but who would be quite capable of appreciating a little at a time. . . .

DCCCI

William Wordsworth to John Taylor Coleridge

RYDAL MOUNT, December 23d, 1843.

My dear Mr. Justice Coleridge,

The first line would certainly have more spirit by reading “your” as you suggest. I had previously considered that, but decided in favour of “the,” as I thought “your,” “ye” being twice repeated and followed by “you” at the close of the fourth line, would clog the sentence in sound. I also thought that “your” would interfere with the application of “you” at the end of the fourth line to the whole of the particular previous images, as I intended it to do. But I don’t trouble you with this letter on that account, but merely to ask you whether the couplet now standing,

Large were his aims, yet in no human breast
Could private feelings find a holier nest,

would not be better thus,

Could private feelings meet in holier rest.

This alteration does not quite satisfy me, but I can do no better. The word "nest" both in itself and in conjunction with "holier" seems to be somewhat bold, and rather startling for marble, particularly in a Church. I should not have thought of any alteration in a merely printed poem, but this makes a difference. If you think the proposed alteration better, don't trouble yourself to answer this. If not, pray be so kind as to tell me so by a single line. I would not on any account have trespassed on your time but for this public occasion.

We are very sorry to hear of Lady Coleridge's indisposition; pray present to her our kind regards and best wishes for her recovery, united with the greetings of the season both for her and yourself.

And believe me, faithfully, your obliged

WM. WORDSWORTH.

DCCCII

William Wordsworth to Mrs. Henry Robinson

RYDAL MOUNT, 27th Dec., 1843.

Dear Mrs. Henry Robinson,

Since I had the pleasure of receiving your kind letter, I have intended every day to thank you for it, but I have been prevented by unlooked-for engagements and occurrences, in addition to such as are usual at this season.

It would have been impossible for me to attend in person as sponsor for your little one, and I the less regret it, as I was represented by her father, to whom return my thanks for his service upon this occasion. Advanced in life as I have been for many a long year, it has more than once happened that I have at first refused the office when

it was proposed to me by parents ; but I have been induced afterwards to accept it by the hope suggested to me that the consciousness of my having stood in that relation to the individual could not but hereafter be salutary, even when I myself was no longer in this world. And it was this feeling, I assure you, which reconciled me to the undertaking the office of sponsor to your child, which I must otherwise have felt bound to decline. May God bless the little infant ! — words which I should have written with due solemnity at any season, but the prayer is expressed with a still deeper feeling at this time, between the festival of Christmas Day and the beginning of a New Year. I am happy to share this office with my dear cousin Sarah Crackanthorpe.

Mrs. Wordsworth unites with me in the kindest greetings of the season to yourself and your husband, and to Mrs. Robinson, and also to Mr. and Mrs. Dixon, and believe me, my dear Mrs. H. Robinson, with high respect and sincere regard,

Faithfully yours,

WM. WORDSWORTH.

1844

DCCCIH

William Wordsworth to Henry Alford

RYDAL MOUNT, Feb. 28, 1844.

My dear Sir,

I am pleased to hear what you are about, but I am far too advanced in life to venture upon anything so difficult to do as hymns of devotion.

The one of mine which you allude to¹ is quite at your service, only I could wish the first line of the fifth stanza to be altered thus :

Each field is then a hallowed spot.

Or you might omit the stanza altogether, if you thought proper, the piece being long enough without it.

Wishing heartily for your success, and knowing in what able hands the work is,

I remain, my dear sir,

Faithfully yours,

WM. WORDSWORTH.

¹ *The Labourer's Noon-Day Hymn*, which Alford wished to include in a collection he was making. — Ed.

DCCCIV

William Wordsworth to Edward Moxon

11th March, 1844.

. . . Within the last week I have had three letters, one from an eminent High Churchman and most popular poet, another from a Quaker, and the third from a Scottish Free Churchman, which together prove how widely the poems interest different classes of men.

DCCCIV

Edward Quillinan to Henry Crabb Robinson

AMBLESIDE, March 19th, 1844.

. . . I am going to write you a short letter about nothing for Mrs. Wordsworth, who has it on her conscience that she has not lately written to you, though she has nothing to say except what you know, viz., that a letter from you is one of the most acceptable things the post-bag ever contains. How are you and your brother? Both well, we hope; and we never fancy you quite well when your brother is otherwise. We have had a roaring storm of wind here, which lasted two or three days, and did mischief among trees, but most at Rydal Mount. The two largest of those fine old cherry-trees on the terrace, nearest the house, were uprooted, and spread their length over the wall and orchard as far as the kitchen-garden; two fir-trees also, both ornamental from their position, and one especially so from its double stem, have been laid prostrate. With proper appliances these might be set up again, but the expense here and inconvenience would be

greater than the annoyance of their removal. Such losses will sound trivial at a distance, but they are felt at home. Those cherry-trees were old servants and companions. Dora and the birds used (in her younger days) to perch together on the boughs for the fruit. . . . Mr. Wordsworth has been working very hard lately, to very little purpose, to mend the versification of *The Excursion*, with some parts of which he is dissatisfied, and no doubt justly; but to mend it without losing more, in the freshness and the force of expression, than he will gain in variety of cadence is, in most cases, I believe, impracticable. "It will do," in spite of my Lord Jeffrey, and its occasional defects in metrical construction, etc. . . .

DCCCVI

William Wordsworth to William Ewart Gladstone

RYDAL MOUNT, 21st March, 1844.

My dear Mr. Gladstone,

Pray accept my thanks for your *State and Prospects of the Church*, which I have carefully read, and which I lent immediately afterwards to a neighbouring clergyman. You have approached the subject in a most becoming spirit, and treated it with admirable ability. From scarcely anything that you have said did I dissent. I only felt some little dissatisfaction as to the limits of your Catholicity, for some limits it must have; but probably you acted wisely in not being more precise upon this point. You advert to the formal and open schism of Methodism, but was not that of Disney, and of others to which Cowper adverts, in some respects of more importance? not as relates to the two or three conspicuous individuals, who seceded

and became preachers in London ; but from its leading the way to the transit of so great a number of Presbyterian clergy, with no small portion of their several congregations, into Unitarianism. This occurred all over England, and was, I believe, especially remarkable in the city of Norwich, though many there took refuge in the Church of England. Happily there is both in the written Word of God, and in the constitution of his creature man, an adequate preservative from that lifeless form of religion ; nevertheless, as it influenced in no small degree what in the Presbyterian and other congregations was called the better educated part of the community, the result was to be lamented, in some respects more than the schism of the Wesleyans, which turned mainly if not exclusively at first upon the rejection of Episcopal jurisdiction, leaving the great points of Catholic doctrine untouched.

To what you have so justly said upon Tractarianism much in the same spirit might be added. It was a grievous mistake that these Tracts, issued from the same place, were numbered, and were at the same time anonymous. Upon the mischief that unavoidably attaches to publications without name — especially, you might have added, corporate publications — you have written with much truth and feeling. But the whole proceeding was wrong, and has led to errors, doubts, and uncertainties, shiftings and ambiguities, — not to say absolute double-dealing, — injurious to readers and perilous to those in whom they originated. First, it has caused the great and pernicious error of the movement being called the Oxford movement, as if it *originated* there, and had sprung up in a moment. But this opinion, which is false in fact, detracts greatly from its dignity, and tends much to narrow and obstruct its range of operation. There is one snare into which it was

impossible that writers so combined should not fall, that of the individual claiming support for his opinion from the body when it suited him so to do, and rejecting it and resting upon his individuality when that answered his purpose better.

As to Romanism, having lived much in countries where it is dominant, and being not unacquainted with much of its history, my horror of it (I will not use a milder term), notwithstanding all that I love and admire in that Church, is great indeed. I trust with you that there is small reason for believing that it will ever supplant our Church in this country, but we must never lose sight of its manifold attractions for the two extremes of our artificial society, the opulent and luxurious — never trained to vigorous thinking, and who have outlived the power of indulging in their excesses — these on the one hand; and on the other, the extreme poor, who are greatly in danger of falling under the influence of its doctrines, pressed upon them by a priesthood so constituted.

But as my departed friend Southey said long ago,

Onward in faith, and leave the rest to Heaven.

With a thousand thanks for your valuable tract, and the best of good wishes for your health and welfare, I remain, with sincere respect and regard, my dear Mr. Gladstone,

Faithfully yours,

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH.

DCCCVII

William Wordsworth to Correspondent Unknown

RYDAL MOUNT, March 26, 1844.

Dear Sir,

Two letters from you at different and (I regret to say) distant times have reached me, accompanied by MS. verses of your own composition. You must have thought me ungracious in not noticing these communications long ago. But so exceedingly numerous are the letters and MS. transmitted to me that I have for some time been obliged to leave them unacknowledged, without any exception, unless they happen to come, which is rare, from persons with whom I am acquainted. You will, therefore, see that in omitting to notice yours there was no disrespect on my part to yourself. The fault in my age, and domestic affliction, and an infirmity of eyesight which disables me from reading at all by candle light, are insurmountable objections to my meeting the wishes of those who may naturally be anxious to have my opinion of their productions. . . . You will perhaps be surprised when I say that nearly every day the year through — or rather at the rate of every day in the year — I have either books sent me, or MS., or applications for autographs. I am, therefore, brought to the necessity above stated. . . . I remain, with good wishes,

Respectfully yours,

W. WORDSWORTH.

DCCCVIII

William Wordsworth to Lady Frederick Bentinck

March 31, 1844.

My dear Lady Frederick,

We have known each other too long and too intimately for you not to be well aware of the reasons why I have not earlier condoled with you upon your bereavement.¹ I feel it deeply, and sympathise with you as much and as truly as you possibly could wish. I have also grieved for the rest of your family and household, and not the least for Miss Thompson, whose faithful and strong attachment to your revered father I have, for a long time, witnessed with delight and admiration. Through my kind friend Mr. O'Brien I have heard of you both; and in his second letter he informs me, to my great sorrow, that Miss Thompson has been exceedingly ill. God grant that she may soon recover, as you both will stand in need of all your bodily strength to support you under so sad a loss. But how much is there to be thankful for in every part of Lord Lonsdale's life to its close! How gently was he dealt with in his last moments! and with what fortitude and Christian resignation did he bear such pains as attended his decline, and prepared the way for his quiet dissolution! Of my own feelings upon this loss I shall content myself with saying, that as long as I retain consciousness I shall cherish the memory of your father for his inestimable worth, as one who honoured me with his friendship, and who was to myself and my children the best benefactor. The sympathy which I now offer, dear Lady Frederick, is shared by my wife, my daughter, and my son William;

¹ The death of Lord Lonsdale. — Ed.

and will be also participated in by my elder son, when he hears of the sad event.

I wrote to Dr. Jackson¹ to inquire whether the funeral was to be strictly private, and learned from him that it is to be so; otherwise I should not have deprived myself of the melancholy satisfaction of attending. Accept, dear Lady Frederick, my best wishes, and be assured of my prayers for your support; and believe me,

Your very affectionate friend,

WM. WORDSWORTH.

DCCCIX

Edward Quillinan to Henry Crabb Robinson

AMBLESIDE, April 7th, 1844.

. . . . As to Article 3 in the *Prospective Review* on *Vestiges of the Natural History of Creation*, it is about as bad as the wretched book itself. I wish wicked people (like you) were not so clever, or clever people (like you) were not so wicked. . . . That volume on the *Vestiges of Creation* is a book of hypotheses grounded mainly on the modern discoveries in geology, a grand and solid foundation, on which free-thinkers build nebulous towers that reach the skies, and from those airy observatories pry into the Holy of Holies, peruse the inner mind of the Almighty, and look down with pity on the ignorant multitudes who have nothing to help them in their heavenward aspirations but blind faith in the truths of revealed religion. "Leave me, leave me to repose!" . . .

¹ The rector of Lowther, and chancellor of the Diocese. — Ed.

DCCCX

*William Wordsworth to John Peace*¹

RYDAL MOUNT, April 8, 1844.

My dear Mr. Peace,

You have gratified me by what you say of Sir Thomas Browne. I possess his *Religio Medici*, *Christian Morals*, *Vulgar Errors*, etc., in separate publications, and value him highly as a most original author. I almost regret that you did not add his treatise upon *Urn Burial* to your publication; it is not long, and very remarkable for the vigour of mind that it displays.

Have you had any communication with Mr. Cottle upon the subject of the subscription which he has set on foot for the erection of a monument to Southey in Bristol Cathedral? We are all engaged in a like tribute to be placed in the parish church of Keswick. For my own part, I am not particularly fond of placing monuments in Churches, at least in modern times. I should prefer their being put in public places in the town with which the party was connected by birth or otherwise; or in the country, if he were a person who lived apart from the bustle of the world. And in Southey's case, I should have liked better a bronze bust, in some accessible and not likely to be disturbed part of St. Vincent's Rocks, as a site, than the Cathedral.

Thanks for your congratulations upon my birthday. I have now entered, awful thought! upon my seventy-fifth year. God bless you, and believe me, my dear friend,

Ever faithfully yours,

WM. WORDSWORTH.

Mrs. Wordsworth begs her kind remembrance, as does Miss Fenwick, who is with us.

¹ The custodian of the City Library, Bristol. — Ed.

DCCCXI

William Wordsworth to Edward Moxon

April 15, 1844.

. . . I wished you and yours could have been with us last Tuesday when upwards of three hundred children, and nearly half as many adults, were entertained in the grounds and rooms of Rydal Mount. It went off delightfully with music, singing, dancing, etc., young and old, gentle and simple, mingling in everything.

DCCCXII

William Wordsworth to Edward Moxon

20th April, 1844.

. . . As to the "Biographical Notices,"¹ they are grossly erroneous; in particular, when it is asserted that I was one of the Pantisocratic Society, though it has been publicly declared by Mr. Southey that the project was given up years² before I was acquainted either with Mr. Coleridge or any one belonging to the scheme. One-half, at least, of what is said of Coleridge, as to the facts of his life, is more or less erroneous; and, drolly enough, he marries me to one of my cousins! He also affirms that my parents were able to send me to college, though one died more than ten years before I went thither, and the other four; but these errors are trifles. The other, as to the Pantisocracy, is a piece of reprehensible negligence.

Ever faithfully yours,

WM. WORDSWORTH.

¹ In the *Encyclopedia*. — Ed.² Not one year really. — Ed.

DCCCXIII

William Wordsworth to Henry Reed

RYDAL MOUNT, 5th July, 1844.

In your last letter you speak so feelingly of the manner in which my birthday (April 7) has been noticed, both privately in your country and somewhat publicly in my own neighbourhood, that I cannot forbear adding a word or two upon the subject. It would have delighted you to see the assemblage in front of our house, some dancing upon the gravel platform, old and young, as described in Goldsmith's *Traveller*; and others, children I mean, chasing each other upon the little plot of lawn to which you descend by steps from the platform. We had music of our own preparing; and two sets of casual itinerants, Italians and Germans, came in successively and enlivened the festivity. There were present upwards of three hundred children and about one hundred and fifty adults of both sexes and all ages, the children in their best attire and of that happy, and I may say beautiful, race which is spread over this highly favoured portion of England. The tables were tastefully arranged in the open air — oranges and gingerbread in piles, decorated with evergreens and spring flowers; and all partook of tea, the young in the open air and the old within doors. I must own I wish that little commemorations of this kind were more common among us.¹

It is melancholy to think how little that portion of the community which is quite at ease in their circumstances

¹ This one was arranged by Isabella Fenwick, then residing at Rydal. — Ed.

have to do in a *social* way with the humbler classes. They purchase commodities of them, or they employ them as labourers, or they visit them in charity for the sake of supplying their most urgent wants by almsgiving. But this, alas, is far from enough; one would wish to see the rich mingle with the poor, as much as may be, upon a footing of fraternal equality. The old feudal dependencies and relations are almost gone from England, and nothing has yet come adequately to supply their place. There are tendencies of the right kind here and there, but they are rather accidental than aught that is established in general manners. Why should not great land-owners look for a substitute for what is lost of feudal paternity in the higher principles of Christianised humanity and humble-minded brotherhood? And why should not this extend to those vast communities which crowd so many parts of England under one head in the different sorts of manufacture, which, for the want of it, are too often the pests of the social state? We are, however, improving, and I trust that the example set by some mill-owners will not fail to influence others.

It gave me pleasure to be told that Mr. Keble's dedication of his *Praelectiones* had fallen in your way, and that you had been struck by it. It is not for me to say how far I am entitled to the honour which he has done me, but I can sincerely say that it has been the main scope of my writings to do what he says I have accomplished. And where could I find a more trustworthy judge?

What you advise in respect to a separate publication of my Church poetry, I have often turned in my own mind; but I have really done so little in that way compared with the magnitude of the subject that I have not courage to venture on such a publication. Besides, it would not, I

fear, pay its expenses. The Sonnets were so published upon the recommendation of a deceased nephew¹ of mine, one of the first scholars of Europe and as good as he was learned. The volume did not, I believe, clear itself, and a great part of the impression, though latterly offered at a reduced price, still remains, I believe, in Mr. Moxon's hands. In this country people who do not grudge laying out their money for new publications, on personal or fugitive interests that every one is talking about, are very unwilling to part with it for literature which is unindebted to temporary excitement. If they buy such at all, it must be for the most part in some form that has little to recommend it but low price.

And now, my dear sir, with many thanks for the trouble you have been at, and affectionate wishes for your welfare,

Believe me, faithfully yours,

WM. WORDSWORTH.

DCCCXIV

William Wordsworth to Henry Crabb Robinson

14th July, 1844.

. . . I wrote to you at some length immediately on receipt of your last to Mrs. Wordsworth, but as my letter turned mainly on the subject of yours — the Dissenters' Chapels Bill — I could not muster resolution to send it, for I felt it was reviving matter of which you had had too much.

I was averse to the bill, and my opinion is not changed. I do not consider the authorities you appeal to as the

¹ John Wordsworth. — Ed.

best judges in a matter of this kind, which it is absurd to treat as a mere question of property or any gross material right or privilege — say a right of road, or any other thing of that kind — for which usage may be pleaded. But the same considerations that prevented my sending the letter in which the subject was treated at length forbid me to enter again upon it ; so let it rest till we have the pleasure of meeting, and then, if it be thought worth while, we may revert to it. . . .

DCCCXV

William Wordsworth to Henry Crabb Robinson

14th July, 1844.

. . . Dr. Arnold's *Life* Mrs. Wordsworth has read diligently. The first volume she read aloud to me, and I have more than skimmed the second. He was a truly good man ; of too ardent a mind, however, to be always judicious on the great points of secular and ecclesiastical polity that occupied his mind, and upon which he often wrote and acted under strong prejudices and with hazardous confidence. But the book, notwithstanding these objections, must do good, and *great* good. His benevolence was so earnest, his life so industrious, his affections, — domestic and social — so intense, his faith so warm and firm, and his endeavour to regulate his life by it so constant, that his example cannot but be beneficial, even in quarters where his opinions may be most disliked. How he hated sin, and loved and thirsted after holiness ! Oh, that on this path he were universally followed ! . . .

DCCCXVI

William Wordsworth to Edward Moxon

July 21, 1844.

. . . To-day, as I rode up Ullswater side, while the vapours were "curling with unconfirmed content" on the mountain-sides, and the blue lake was streaked with silver light, I felt as if no country could be more beautiful than ours; and certainly there is one point in which our scenery has a striking advantage over that of the greater part of the Continent. Our forest trees are preserved from that horrible mutilation which prevails almost everywhere in Italy, and disfigures the Austrian and Bavarian lakes woefully.

DCCCXVII

William Wordsworth to D. S. Williamson

RYDAL MOUNT, Friday, 27th July, 1844.

. . . It does not surprise me that you feel interested in the Burns festival. So do I, having always thought as highly of him as a poet as any perhaps of his countrymen may do. But it is quite out of my power to attend, as I informed the committee and Professor Wilder in answer to their several invitations. . . .

It gives me pleasure to learn that you approve of the manner in which I have coupled your loftiest and most conspicuous mountain with our own Skiddaw, as forming links of connection between Burns and myself. I have

been lately residing on the Cumberland coast at Flimby, from which place I had glorious views of the sun setting upon your line of hills. Nothing can be finer than the effect often was, with the Solway rolling between. . . .

Sincerely, your much obliged,

WM. WORDSWORTH.

DCCCXVIII

William Wordsworth to Elizabeth Barrett

RYDAL MOUNT, 16th Aug., 1844.

Dear Miss Barrett,

Being exceedingly engaged, as I always am at this season, I think it best to acknowledge immediately my sense of your kindness in sending me the two volumes of your poems recently published; from the perusal of which, when I am at leisure, I promise myself great pleasure. . . . Believe me, dear Miss Barrett, to remain, with high respect,

Faithfully yours,

W. WORDSWORTH.

DCCCXIX

William Wordsworth to Basil Montagu

RYDAL MOUNT, Oct. 1, 1844.

My dear Montagu,

Absence from home has prevented my replying earlier to your letter, which gave me much pleasure on many accounts, and particularly as I learned from it that you are so industrious, and to such good effect. I don't

wonder at your mention of the friends whom we have lost by death. Bowles, the poet, still lives, and Rogers — all that survive of the poetical fraternity with whom I have had any intimacy. Southey, Campbell, and Cary are no more. Of my class-fellows and school-fellows very few remain; my *intimate* associates of my own college are all gone long since. Myers my cousin, Terrot, Jones my fellow-traveller, Fleming, and his brother Raincock of Pembroke, Bishop Middleton of the same college, — it has pleased God that I should survive them all. Then there are none left but Joseph Cottle of the many friends I made at Bristol and in Somersetshire; yet we are only in our seventy-fifth year. But enough of this sad subject: let us be resigned under all dispensations, and thankful; for that is our duty, however difficult it may be to perform it. I send you the lock of hair which you desired, white as snow, and taken from a residue which is thinning rapidly.

You neither mention your own health nor Mrs. Montagu's; I conclude, therefore, that both of you are doing well. Pray remember me kindly to her; and believe me, my dear Montagu,

Your faithful and affectionate friend,

WM. WORDSWORTH.

In speaking of our Bristol friends I forgot to mention John Pinney, but him I have neither seen nor heard of for many years.

DCCCXX

William Wordsworth to Henry Reed

Nov. 18th, 1844.

My dear Mr. Reed,

Mrs. Wordsworth and I have been absent from home for a month past, and we deferred acknowledging your acceptable letter till our return.

Among the places to which we went on visits to our friends was Cambridge, where I was happy to learn that great improvement was going on among the young men. They were become much more regular in their conduct and attentive to their duties.

Our host was the Master of Trinity College, Dr. Whewell, successor to my brother Dr. Wordsworth, who filled the office for more than twenty years highly to his honour, and resigned before he was disqualified by age, lest as his years advanced his judgment might be impaired and his powers become unfit for the responsibility without his being aware of it. This, you will agree with me, was a noble example ; may it be followed by others.

In the matter of religion — to which the thoughts of youth in general are much more turned than heretofore — I was pleased to learn that what is commonly called “low church” is quite in disrepute, and there is no tendency to popery as far as appears.

On our return home we were detained two hours at Northampton by the vast crowd assembled to greet the Queen on her way to Burleigh House. Shouts and ringing of bells there were in abundance, but these are matters of course. It did please us, however, greatly to see every village we passed through for the space of twenty-two

miles decorated with triumphal arches, and every cottage, however humble, with its little display of laurel and flowers hung from the windows and above the doors. The people, young and old, were all making holiday, and the Queen could not but be affected by these universal manifestations of affectionate loyalty.

As I have said, we were detained two hours, and I much regret that it did not strike me at the moment to throw off my feelings in verse, for I had ample time to have done so, and might perhaps have contrived to present through one of the authorities a tribute to my Royal Mistress. How must these words shock your republican ears ! but you are too well acquainted with mankind and their history not to be aware that love of country can clothe itself in many shapes !

I need not say what pleasure it would give us to see you and Mrs. Reed in our beautiful place of abode.

I have no wish to see the review of my poems to which you allude. It is too late in life for me to profit by censure, and I am indifferent to praise merely as such.

Mrs. Wordsworth will be happy to write her opinion of the portrait, as you request. Believe me, my dear Mr. Reed,

Faithfully yours,

WM. WORDSWORTH.

DCCCXXI

Mary Wordsworth to Henry Reed

My dear Sir,

[No date.]

It is gratifying to me to be able to answer with perfect sincerity, and in a way that must be satisfactory to you, the question you have done me the honour to ask ; for I can have no hesitation in saying that in my opinion, and (what

is of more value) to my feelings, Mr. Inman's portrait of my husband is the best likeness that has been taken of him. And I am happy on this occasion to congratulate you and Mrs. Reed upon the possession of so valuable a treasure. At the same time I must express the obligation I feel to the painter for having produced so faithful a record. To this testimony I may add that my daughter and her younger brother (the elder is abroad, and has not seen it) are as much satisfied with the portrait of their father as I am.

Believe me, dear sir, with respectful regards to Mrs. Reed,

Very sincerely, your obliged

M. WORDSWORTH.

DCCCXXII

William Wordsworth to Correspondent Unknown

[1844.]

I feel myself in so many respects unworthy of your love, and too likely to become more so. Worldly-minded I am not; on the contrary, my wish to benefit those within my humble sphere strengthens seemingly in exact proportion to my inability to realise those wishes. What I lament most is that the spirituality of my nature does not expand and rise the nearer I approach the grave, as yours does, and as it fares with my beloved partner. The pleasure which I derive from God's works in his visible creation is not, I think, impaired with me; but reading does not interest me as it used to do, and I feel that I am becoming daily a less instructive companion to others. Excuse this egotism. I feel it necessary to your understanding of what I am, and how little would you gain by habitual intercourse with me, however greatly I might benefit from intercourse with you.

1845

DCCCXXIII

William Wordsworth to Edward Moxon

27th Jan., 1845.

. . . Mr. Robinson, who leaves us to-day, will report to you all, I think, about your proposal of printing my prose writings in a separate volume.

Speaking of Mr. Quillinan, as to any literary work of his own, I am sure it would never sell, unless he condescended — which he will never do — to traffic in the trade of praise, with London authorlings who write in newspapers, magazines, and reviews. . . .

DCCCXXIV

William Wordsworth to Edward Moxon

10th April, 1845.

. . . Having long wished that an edition of my poems should be published without the prefaces and supplements, etc., I submit to you whether that would not be well ; printing, however, the prose now attached to the volumes as a portion of the prose volume which you meditate. The prefaces, etc., contain many important observations upon poetry, but they were written solely to gratify Coleridge ; and for my own part, being quite

against anything of the kind, and having always been of opinion that poetry should stand upon its own merits, I would not even attach to the poems any explanation of the grounds of their arrangement.

. . . I can't muster courage to face the fatigue and late dinners of London, and therefore don't think it likely I shall leave home.

DCCCXXV

William Wordsworth to Edward Moxon

18th April, 1845.

An invitation from the Lord Chamberlain to attend the Queen's ball on the twenty-fifth of May left me without a choice as to visiting London. . . .

I have another favour to ask, which is that you would mention my errand to Mr. Rogers; perhaps he could put me in the way of being properly introduced, and instructed how to behave in a situation, I am sorry to say, altogether new to me.

DCCCXXVI

William Wordsworth to Correspondent Unknown

RYDAL MOUNT, April 22d, 1845.

My dear Friend,

The little book you have sent to me, consisting of the Memoirs of Mr. B. L. Way and his son, the Rev. Lewis Way,¹ I have read with great interest. Their lives harmonise beautifully in that both were strictly governed by

¹ Lewis Way (1772-1840), second son of Benjamin Way of Denham, Merton College, Oxford, Inner Temple, in 1797 became a clergyman, and founded a chapel in Paris. — Ed.

principles of duty, while they contrast most strikingly as to the manner in which those principles put themselves into action.

Mr. Ellis falls into a mistake when, speaking of Mr. B. L. Way, he says that "happiness is the only rational object of pursuit"; but he is right when, in the same sentence, he affirms that the means of happiness (he ought to have said the *only* means) are to be found in the practice of religion. Mr. Way's own words are, "I endeavour upon principle to have no business but my duty," and he adds, "my amusements are excited by duty"; and the rule of duty he gathers from his Bible, with the assistance of wise and good men.

The whole of the little volume (with the exception that for ordinary perusal too much space is given to Mr. B. L. Way's literary pursuits) I found so interesting as earnestly to desire to see it printed in some shape that would give it a wide circulation; and this would perhaps be most effectually done, if it could be included in some collection of brief biographies confined exclusively to the lives of men of remarkable virtues and talents, though not universally or generally known. The number of these, if sought for, would be found considerable, and I cannot but think they would tend more to excite imitation than accounts of men so pre-eminent in genius and so favoured by opportunity as rather to discourage than inspire emulation.

One word more, — every intelligent reader must be struck by the sound judgment with which Mr. Way manages his nervous depressions and apprehensions, and how he makes them subservient to the improvement of his own character. Would that others, who have like infirmities to contend with, might be induced to follow his example, and prove equally successful!

Pray do not impute it to any want of desire to meet your wishes if I feel myself obliged to declare that I cannot presume to write anything that would deserve the name of a "preface" upon this occasion. If I were to put down in writing but a small portion of the thoughts raised in my mind by the perusal of these well-paired Memoirs, you would have to read a volume larger than that which you sent, which I now return to you with sincere thanks. . . .

WM. WORDSWORTH.

DCCCXXVII

William Wordsworth to Edward Moxon

RYDAL MOUNT, 12th May, 1845.

I was enchanted when I came into the Lake District, a little above Bowness, that beautiful romance of Nature. Every object — fields, woods, lakes, mountains, sunshine, and shade — seen all the way in the utmost perfection of spring beauty.

DCCCXXVIII

William Wordsworth to Edward Moxon

June, 1845.

I think I mentioned to you that I had an utter dislike to the print from Pickersgill prefixed to the poems. It does me, and him also, great injustice. What would be the expense of an engraving of Chantrey's bust? That I should like infinitely better.

DCCCXXIX

*William Wordsworth to Christopher Wordsworth*¹

RYDAL MOUNT, June 30, 1845.

My dear Christopher,

I ought to have acknowledged my debt to you long ago, but the inflammation in one of my eyes which seized me on my first arrival in London kept it closed for a long time. I had your first two pamphlets read to me, and immediately put them into circulation among my friends in this neighbourhood ; but wishing to read them myself, I did not like to write to you till I had done so, as there were one or two passages on which I wished to make a remark.

As to your arguments, they are unanswerable, and the three tracts do you the greatest possible credit ; but the torrent cannot be stemmed, unless we can construct a body — I will not call it a party — upon a new and true principle of action, as you have set forth. Certain questions are forced by the present conduct of Government upon the mind of every observing and thinking person. . . .

The Romanists are not a majority in England and Ireland, taken, as they ought to be, together. As to Scotland, it has its separate Kirk by especial covenant. Are the ministers prepared to alter fundamentally the basis of the Union between England and Ireland, and to construct a new one? If they be, let them tell us so at once. In short, they are involving themselves and the Nation in difficulties from which there is no escape — for them, at least, none. What I have seen of your letter to Lord John M——² I like as well as your two former tracts, and I shall read it carefully at my first leisure moment. . . .

¹ His nephew. — Ed.² Lord John Manners. — Ed.

DCCCXXX

*William Wordsworth to John Moultrie*¹

[1845.]

My dear Sir,

My copy of the Ode,² in Gray's own handwriting, has

Ah, happy Hills, ah, pleasant Shade.

I wonder how Bentley could ever have substituted
"Rills," a reading which has no support in the context.
The common copies read, a few lines below,

Full many a *sprightly* race.

Gray's own copy has,

Full many a *smiling* race.

Throughout the whole poem the substantives are
written in Capital Letters. He writes "Fury-Passions,"
and not, as commonly printed, the "fury-passions." What
is the reason that our modern compositors are so unwilling
to employ Capital Letters? Believe me, my dear sir,

Faithfully yours,

WM. WORDSWORTH.

¹ John Moultrie (1799-1874), minor English poet, rector of Rugby from 1828, published *My Brother's Grave* in 1827, and *The Dream of Life* in 1843. — Ed.

² The Ode on a Distant Prospect of Eton College. — Ed.

DCCCXXXI

William Wordsworth to Henry Reed

RYDAL MOUNT, AMBLESIDE, July 1, 1845.

My dear Mr. Reed,

I have, as usual, been long in your debt, which I am pretty sure you will excuse as heretofore. It gave me much pleasure to have a glimpse of your brother under circumstances which no doubt he will have described to you. He spoke of his health as improved, and I hope it will continue to do so. I understood from him that it was probable he would call at Rydal before his return to his own country. I need not say to you that I shall be glad, truly glad, to see him, both for his own sake and as so nearly connected with you. My absence from home lately was not for more than three weeks. I took the journey to London solely to pay my respects to the Queen upon my appointment to the laureateship after the decease of my friend Mr. Southey. The weather was very cold, and I caught an inflammation in one of my eyes, which rendered my stay in the South very uncomfortable. I nevertheless did, in respect to the object of my journey, all that was required. The reception given me by the Queen at her ball was most gracious. Mrs. Everett, the wife of your minister, among many others, was a witness to it, without knowing who I was. It moved her to the shedding of tears. This effect was in part produced, I suppose, by American habits of feeling, as pertaining to a republican government.

To see a gray-haired man of seventy-five years of age kneeling down in a large assembly to kiss the hand of a

young woman is a sight for which Institutions essentially democratic do not prepare a spectator of either sex, and must naturally place the opinions upon which a Republic is founded, and the sentiments which support it, in strong contrast with a government based and upheld as ours is. I am not, therefore, surprised that Mrs. Everett was moved, as she described herself as being to persons of my acquaintance, among others to Mr. Rogers, the poet. By-the-bye, of this gentleman, now I believe in his eighty-third year, I saw more than of any other person except my host, Mr. Moxon, while I was in London. He is singularly fresh and strong for his years, and his mental faculties (with the exception of his memory a little) not at all impaired. It is remarkable that he and the Rev. W. Bowles¹ were both distinguished as poets when I was a school-boy, and they have survived almost all their eminent contemporaries, several of whom came into notice long after them. Since they became known, Burns, Cowper, and Mason,² the author of *Caractacus* and friend of Gray, have died. Thomas Warton, Laureate, then Byron, Shelley, Keats, and a good deal later Scott, Coleridge, Crabb, Southey, Lamb, the Ettrick Shepherd, Cary the translator of Dante, Crowe³ the author of *Lewesdon Hill*, and others of more or less distinction have disappeared. And now of English poets, advanced in life, I cannot recall any but James Montgomery, Thomas Moore, and myself who are living, except the octogenarian with whom I began.

I saw Tennyson several times when I was in London. He is decidedly the first of our living poets, and I hope

¹ William Lisle Bowles (1762-1850), poet, antiquary, clergyman. — Ed.

² William Mason (1724-1797). — Ed.

³ William Crowe (1745-1829). — Ed.

will live to give the world still better things. You will be pleased to hear that he expressed in the strongest terms his gratitude to my writings. To this I was far from indifferent, though persuaded that he is not much in sympathy with what I should myself most value in my attempts, viz. the spirituality with which I have endeavoured to invest the material Universe, and the moral relations under which I have wished to exhibit its most ordinary appearances.

I ought not to conclude this first portion of my letter without telling you that I have now under my roof a cousin who some time ago was introduced (improperly I think, she being then a child) to the notice of the public as one of the English poetesses, in an article in the *Quarterly* so entitled. Her name is Emmeline Fisher, and her mother is my first cousin. What advances she may have made in late years I do not know, but her productions from the age of eight to twelve were no less than astonishing. She arrived only yesterday, and we promise ourselves much pleasure in seeing more of her. Our dear friend Miss Fenwick is also under our roof; so is Katharine Southey, her late father's youngest daughter, so that we reckon ourselves rich, though our only daughter is far from us, being gone to Oporto with her husband on account of her enfeebled frame. Most unfortunately, soon after her arrival, she was seized with a violent attack of rheumatic fever, caused by exposure to the evening air. We have also been obliged lately to part with four grandsons, very fine boys, who are gone with their father to Italy to visit their mother, kept there by severe illness, which sent her abroad two years ago. Under these circumstances we old people keep our spirits as well as we can, trusting the end to God's goodness.

Now for the enclosed poem,¹ which I wrote the other day, and which I send to you, hoping it may give you some pleasure, as a scanty repayment for all that we owe you. Our dear friend Miss Fenwick is especially desirous that her warmest thanks should be returned to you for all the trouble you have taken about her bonds. But to return to the verses: if you approve, pray forward them with my compliments and thanks for his letter to——. In his letter he states that with others he is strenuously exerting himself in endeavours to abolish slavery, and that, as one of the means of disposing the public mind to that measure, he is about to publish selections from various authors in behalf of humanity. He begs an original composition from me. I have nothing bearing directly upon slavery, but if you think this little piece would serve his cause indirectly, pray be so kind as to forward it to him. He speaks of himself as deeply indebted to my writings.

I have not left room to subscribe myself more than

Affectionately yours,

WM. WORDSWORTH.

DCCCXXXII

William Wordsworth to Henry Reed

31st July, 1845.

. . . I am at present carrying through the press an edition, in double column, of my poems including the last, the contents of which will be interspersed in their several places. In the heading of the pages I have followed the

¹ *The Westmoreland Girl*, dated June 6, 1845. — Ed.

example of your edition by extending the classification of Imagination far beyond what it has hitherto been except in your edition. The book will be by no means so well-looking as yours; the contents will be more crowded. The new matter is not of much consequence, but will amount to about three hundred lines. The little poem which I ventured to send you lately¹ I thought might interest you on account of the fact, as exhibiting what sort of characters our mountains breed. It is truth to the letter. If you have a copy pray insert after the words "sharp-toothed pike" this stanza :

Merciful protectress, kindling
Into anger or disdain;
Many a captive hath she rescued,
Others saved from lingering pain.

and after "Maid of Arc," at the conclusion, this stanza :

Leave that word — and here he offered
Prayer that Grace divine would raise
This humane courageous spirit
Up to Heaven through peaceful ways.

It was thought by some of my friends that the other conclusion took the mind of the reader away from the subject.

Faithfully yours,

W. WORDSWORTH.

¹ *The Westmoreland Girl*. — Ed.

DCCCXXXIII

William Wordsworth to Henry Reed

BRINSOP COURT, Sept. 27, [1845.]

My dear Mr. Reed,

The sight of your letter was very welcome, and its contents proved most agreeable. It was well that you did not forward my little poem to the party, since he entertains the opinions he holds, and is of the character you describe. I shall therefore be gratified if you, as you propose, write him a note, expressing that I have nothing among my manuscripts that would suit his purpose. The verses are already printed in the new edition of my poems (double column) which is going through the press. It will contain about three hundred verses not found in the previous edition. I do not remember whether I have mentioned to you that, following your example, I have greatly extended the class entitled "Poems of the Imagination," thinking, as you must have done, that if imagination were predominant in the class it was not indispensable that it should pervade every poem which it contained. Limiting the class as I had done before seemed to imply, and to the uncandid or unobserving it did so, that this faculty, which is the *primum mobile* in poetry, had little to do, in the estimation of the author, with the pieces not arranged under that head. I therefore feel much obliged to you for suggesting by your practice the plan which I have adopted.

Mrs. Wordsworth and I left home four days ago, and do not intend to return, if all goes well, in less than five or six weeks from this time. We purpose on our way home to visit York, the cathedral of which city has been

restored, and thence we shall go to Leeds on a visit to our friend, Mr. James Marshall, in full expectation that we shall be highly delighted by the humane and judicious manner in which his manufactory is managed, and by inspecting the schools that he and his brothers have established and superintended. We also promise ourselves much pleasure from the sight of the magnificent Church which has been built upon the foundation of the old Parish Church of that town through the exertion and by the munificence of the present incumbent, that most excellent and able man, Dr. Hook, whom I have the honour of reckoning among my friends. This letter is written by the side of my brother-in-law, who eight years ago became a cripple, confined to his chair by the accident of his horse falling with him on the high road, where he lay without power to move either hand or leg, but left in perfect possession of his faculties. His bodily sufferings are by this time somewhat less, but they still continue severe. His patience and cheerfulness are so admirable that I would not forbear mentioning him to you. He is an example to us all, and most hardened should we be if we did not profit by it. His family have lately succeeded in persuading him to have his portrait taken as he sits in his arm chair. It is an excellent likeness—one of the best I ever saw—and will be invaluable to his family.

This reminds me of Mr. Inman and a promise which he made that he would send us a copy of your portrait of myself. I say a promise, though it scarcely amounted to that absolutely, but it was little short of it. Do you think he could find time to act upon his own wish in this matter? I feel interested in it on Mrs. Wordsworth's account, who reckons that portrait much the best, both as

to likeness and execution, of all that have been made of me, and she is an excellent judge. In adverting to this subject, I of course presume that you would have no objection to the picture being copied, if the artist were inclined to do it.

My paper admonishes me that I must conclude. Pray let me know in your next how Mrs. Reed and your family are in health, and present my good wishes to her.

Ever your faithful and obliged friend,

WM. WORDSWORTH.

DCCCXXXIV

*William Wordsworth to Derwent Coleridge*¹

BRINSOP COURT, HEREFORD, 29th Sept., 1845.

My dear Derwent,

Your letter announcing the decease of our long-tried friend, your excellent mother, followed Mrs. Wordsworth and me to this place. It was a great shock to us, being so sudden, and the recent correspondence between your good mother and Mrs. W. not having made mention of her health being in a *worse* state, and shewing that her faculties were unimpaired. It was very kind in you to enter into particulars as you did, and also to let us know how dear Sara bore her afflicting loss. Pray give our kindest love and most earnest and affectionate wishes to her. The privation must be deeply felt by her. It is a rare thing to see a mother and daughter so long and so closely and tenderly united as they have been since Sara was an infant. More than fifty years have elapsed since

¹ Son of S. T. Coleridge. — Ed.

I first became acquainted with your mother, and her departure naturally sends back my mind into long past events and circumstances, which cause in me feelings with which it is impossible you can adequately sympathise. Her memory will, for the short remainder of my days, continue in a high degree interesting to me. Link after link is broken, and yet for the most part we do not bear those severings in mind as we ought to do. . . .

The good family under whose roof we are, thank God, are all well and healthy; Mr. Hutchinson gaining power, though very slowly, and though suffering much, yet less and less in some degree every year. He is an example of patience and cheerful resignation almost beyond what one could have conceived possible.

God bless you, my dear Derwent.

Your affectionate and faithful friend,

WM. WORDSWORTH.

DCCCXXXV

William Wordsworth to Edward Moxon

November 5th, 1845.

I have considered, and reconsidered, the title;¹ and I cannot make up my mind to adhere to any but simply

THE POEMS OF WILLIAM WORDSWORTH.

I hope that you won't object to this, bold as it is.
There is a small poem, beginning

If thou indeed desire thy light from Heaven,

¹ To be given to the new volume of his poems. — Ed.

which the printer has been directed to place before the poems. I mean it to serve as a sort of preface. All the prose prefaces, and in fact all the prose (except a few brief notes printed at the bottom of the pages), will be printed at the end of the volume, it being now my wish that the poems should be left to speak for themselves, though I did not think it prudent to suppress any considerable portion of the prose.

DCCCXXXVI

Mary Wordsworth to Sara Coleridge

November 7, 1845.

. . . With my husband's tender love to you he bids me say, in reply to a question you have put to him through Miss Fenwick, that he has not as distinct a remembrance as he could wish of the time when he first saw your father and your uncle Southey; but the impression upon his mind is that he first saw them both, and your aunt Edith at the same time, in a lodging in Bristol. This must have been about the year 1795.¹ Your father, he says, came afterwards to see us at Racedown, where I was then living with my sister. We have both a distinct remembrance of his arrival. He did not keep to the high road, but leaped over a gate and bounded down a pathless field, by which he cut off an angle. We both retain the liveliest possible image of his appearance at that moment. My poor sister has just been speaking of it to me with much feeling and tenderness. Ever, dear Sara,

Most affectionately yours,

M. WORDSWORTH.

¹ It was in September, 1795. — Ed.

DCCCXXXVII

William Wordsworth to Edward Moxon

25th Nov., 1845.

Miss Martineau called here to-day. She is in excellent health and spirits, very busy with house-building and book-writing, by which latter I hope you will profit. Remember me most kindly to Mr. Rogers and his sister, and to dear old Miss Lamb.

DCCCXXXVIII

William Wordsworth to Edward Moxon

Nov. 27, 1845.

The print of the house ¹ is faulty as to the porch, and this was probably in consequence of a defect in the drawing, which was not by a professional artist. The porch looks more like a substantial adjunct to the house than trellis-work (which it is), and open in front. Could this effect be given by the engraver? It would be a great improvement,—only a few flowers and plants hanging against and upon the trellis-work. The drawing was taken from a distance, so that all the lower windows are hidden. I should like one to be seen by taking away a few of the boughs which hide it, but perhaps that is impossible. . . .

¹ Rydal Mount. — Ed.

DCCCXXXIX

William Wordsworth to Joseph Cottle

RYDAL MOUNT, Dec. 6, 1845.

My dear old Friend,

Now for your little tract, *Heresiarch Church of Rome*. I have perused it carefully, and go the whole length with you in condemnation of Romanism, and probably much further, by reason of my having passed at least three years of life in countries where Romanism was the prevailing or exclusive religion; and if we are to trust the declaration, "By their fruits ye shall know them," I have stronger reasons, in the privilege I have named, for passing a severe condemnation upon leading parts of their faith and courses of their practice than others who have never been eye-witnesses of the evils to which I allude. Your little publication is well-timed, and will, I trust, have such an effect as you aimed at upon the minds of its readers.

And now let me bid you affectionately good-bye, with assurance that I do and shall retain to the last a remembrance of your kindness and of the many pleasant and happy hours which, at one of the most interesting periods of my life, I passed in your neighbourhood and in your company.

Ever most faithfully yours,

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH.

DCCCXL

William Wordsworth to Edward Moxon

RYDAL MOUNT, Dec. 20, 1845.

. . . Yesterday I had a letter from a gentleman of St. Andrews, unknown to me, who says he has already given eight copies¹ among his relations and friends, and means to make presents of more in the same way. . . .

¹ Doubtless of the poems. — Ed.

1846

DCCCXLI

William Wordsworth to Henry Reed

RYDAL MOUNT, Jan. 23, 1846.

My dear Mr. Reed,

. . . I hope to be able to send you an impression of an engraving, from a picture of Mr. Haydon, representing me in the act of climbing Helvellyn. There is great merit in this work, and the sight of it will show my meaning on the subject of *expression*. This, I think, is attained; but then, I am stooping, and the inclination of the head necessarily causes a foreshortening of the features below the nose, which takes from the likeness accordingly; so that, upon the whole, yours has the advantage, especially under the circumstance of your never having seen the original. Mrs. Wordsworth has been looking over your letters in vain to find the address of the person in London through whose hands any parcel for you might be sent. Pray take the trouble of repeating the address in your next letter, and your request shall be attended to of sending you my two letters upon the offensive subject of a Railway to and through our beautiful neighbourhood.

. . . You will be sorry to hear that Mrs. Wordsworth and I have been, and still are, under great trouble and anxiety. Our daughter-in-law fell into bad health between three and four years ago. She went with her husband to

Madeira, where they remained nearly a year; she was then advised to go to Italy. After a prolonged residence there, her six children, whom her husband returned to England for, went, at her earnest request, to that country under their father's guidance; there he was obliged, on account of his duty as a clergyman, to leave them. Four of the number resided with their mother at Rome, three of whom took a fever there, of which the youngest, as noble a boy of nearly five years as ever was seen, died, being seized with convulsions when the fever was somewhat subdued. The father, in a distracted state of mind, is just gone back to Italy; and we are most anxious to hear the result. My only surviving brother also, the late Master of Trinity College, Cambridge, and an inestimable person, is in an alarming state of health; and the only child of my eldest brother, long since deceased, is now languishing under mortal illness at Ambleside. He was educated for the medical profession, and caught his illness while on duty in the Mediterranean. He is a truly amiable and excellent young man, and will be universally regretted. These sad occurrences, with others of like kind, have thrown my mind into a state of feeling which the other day vented itself in the two sonnets which Mrs. Wordsworth will transcribe as the best acknowledgment she can make for Mrs. Reed's and your kindness.

Ever faithfully and affectionately yours,

WM. WORDSWORTH.

DCCCXLII

William Wordsworth to Benjamin Robert Haydon

RYDAL MOUNT, Jan. 24th, 1846.

My dear Haydon,

I was sorry that I could not give you a more satisfactory answer to your request for a motto for the engraving of your admirable portrait of my ascent towards the top of Helvellyn. Pray let me have a few impressions, when it is finished, sent to Moxon, as I myself think that it is the best likeness, that is, the most characteristic, that has been done of me.

Believe me, dear Haydon,

Faithfully, your obliged friend,

W. WORDSWORTH.

DCCCXLIII

William Wordsworth to Henry Reed

February 3, 1846.

My dear Mr. Reed,

I was much shocked to find that my last had been despatched without acknowledgment for your kindness in sending me the admirable engraving of Bishop White, which I was delighted, on many accounts, to receive. This omission was owing to the distressed state of mind in which I wrote, and which I throw myself on your goodness to excuse. I ought to have written again by next post, but we really have been, and still are, in such trouble from various causes that I could not take up the pen, and now must beg you to accept this statement as the only excuse which I can offer. We have had such accounts from my daughter-in-law at Rome that her mother and

brother are just gone thither to support her, her mother being seventy years of age.

Do you know anything of a wretched set of religionists in your country, *superstitionists* I ought to say, called Mormonites, or Latter-Day Saints? Would you believe it? a niece of Mrs. Wordsworth's has just embarked, we believe at Liverpool, with a set of the deluded followers of that wretch, in an attempt to join their society. She is a young woman of good abilities and well educated, but early in life she took from her mother and her connections a methodistical turn, and has gone on in a course of what she supposes to be piety till she has come to this miserable close. If you should by chance hear anything about her, pray let us know.

The report of my brother's decease, which we look for every day, has not yet reached us. My nephew is still lingering on from day to day.

Ever faithfully and affectionately yours,

WM. WORDSWORTH.

The print of Bishop White is noble ; everything, indeed, that could be wished.

DCCCXLIV

William Wordsworth to William Rowan Hamilton

RYDAL MOUNT, March 14, 1846.

My dear Sir William,

Having just received from you a notification that the Royal Irish Academy has conferred upon me the distinction of electing me an honorary member of their body. I beg you will express to the council and to the academy my deep sense of the honour of being admitted into a

society so eminent for Science and Literature ; let me add that the interest I have always taken in the sister country, and in everything calculated to promote its welfare, greatly enhances the gratification afforded me by this act of the academy.

The diploma to which you refer has not yet reached me, or I should, of course, have acknowledged it. As the matter stands, this answer to your notification will, I hope, arrive in time to be read by you to the academy before you resign the chair, and be accepted by their courtesy in place of a more formal acknowledgment. I cannot conclude without expressing my sincere regret that the society is about to lose the benefit of your services as president, and the honour of having your name at its head. It is impossible that any personal consideration could have made the honour which I now acknowledge more acceptable than its having been proposed by one holding so high a position as you do in the scientific and literary world, and filling an equally high place in the private regards of your friends, among whom I have long thought it a great happiness to be numbered.

Believe me, my dear Sir William,

Ever most faithfully, your much obliged

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH.

DCCCXLV

William Wordsworth to Mrs. Clarkson

RYDAL MOUNT, 2d October, 1846.

My dear Mrs. Clarkson,

We condole with you most sincerely on the separation which you have just had to suffer,¹ and pray that the

¹ The death of Thomas Clarkson.— Ed.

Almighty will comfort you in your distress. You will find abundant consolation in looking back upon your husband's services in the cause of humanity, commenced in his youth and continued for such a length of time with unremitting zeal. We are very sorry that Mr. C. Robinson happens to be abroad at this time, as probably he might have been of no small service to you ; and we feel persuaded that he will hasten his return home as soon as he hears of the event, which might well be called a sad one, were it not that your husband died so full of years. . . . I remain,

Faithfully and affectionately yours,

WM. WORDSWORTH.

DCCCXLVI

William Wordsworth to Edward Moxon

Oct. 12, 1846.

. . . We were not aware that Mrs. Q.¹ had made up her mind to publish her Journal. This she never could have thought of but for the hope of raising a little money. Her mother and I don't like it, and *she* would shrink from notoriety.

Miss Barrett,² I am pleased to learn, is so far recovered as to have taken to herself a husband. Her choice is a very able man, and I trust that it will be a happy union, not doubting that they will speak more intelligibly to each other than (notwithstanding their abilities) they have yet done to the public. . . .

¹ His daughter Dora, Mrs. Quillinan. Her *Journal of a Few Months' Residence in Portugal* was published in the year 1847. — Ed.

² Elizabeth Barrett Barrett, wife of Robert Browning. — Ed.

DCCCXLVII

William Wordsworth to Edward Moxon

Nov. 13, 1846.

I have not alluded to the Lord Rectorship of the Glasgow University. I am glad I was not elected (I knew nothing of having been nominated), as I should have much disliked being compelled to go to Glasgow, and above all things, being compelled to make a public exhibition of myself, and to stumble through a speech, a work in which I have had no experience whatever.

DCCCXLVIII

*William Wordsworth to Sir William M. Gomm*¹

RYDAL MOUNT, AMBLESIDE,

Nov. 23, 1846.

Dear Sir William,

Your kind letter of the fourth of August I have just received, and I thank you sincerely for this mark of your attention, and for the gratification it afforded me. It is pleasing to see fancy amusements giving birth to works of solid profit, as under the auspices of Lady Gomm they are doing in your island.

Your sonnet addressed to the unfinished monument of Governor Malartie is conceived with appropriate feeling

¹ Sir William Maynard Gomm (1784-1875) had a distinguished military career in the Peninsular War, was with Wellington at Waterloo, was afterwards governor of Mauritius for seven years, went thence to India as commander-in-chief, and ultimately became field-marshal. He was a man of literary merit and became D.C.L. of Oxford. His *Letters and Journals* were published in 1881. — Ed.

and just discrimination. Long may the finished monument last as a tribute to departed worth, and as a check and restraint upon intemperate desires for change to which the inhabitants of the island may hereafter be liable!

Before this letter reaches you the newspapers will probably have told you that I have been recently put in nomination, unknown to myself, for the high office of Lord Rector of the University of Glasgow; and that there was a majority of twenty-one votes in my favour, in opposition to the premier, Lord John Russell. The forms of the election, however, allowed Lord John Russell to be returned, through the single vote of the sub-rector voting for his superior. To say the truth, I am glad of this result, being too advanced in life to undertake with comfort any considerable public duty, and it might have seemed ungracious to decline the office.

Men of rank or of high station, with the exception of the poet Campbell—who was, I believe, educated at this university—have almost invariably been chosen as rector; and that another exception was made in my favour by a considerable majority affords a proof that Literature, independent of office, does not want due estimation. I should not have dwelt so long upon this subject had anything personal to myself occurred in which you could have taken interest.

As you do not mention your own health, or that of Lady Gomm, I infer with pleasure that the climate agrees with you both. That this may continue to be so is my earnest and sincere wish, in which Mrs. Wordsworth cordially unites.

Believe me, dear Sir William,

Faithfully yours,

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH.

1847

DCCCXLIX

William Wordsworth to C. B. Phipps

BATH, 15th March, 1847.

Sir,

The request with which through your hands his Royal Highness the Prince Albert has honoured me could not but be highly gratifying, and I hope that I may be able upon this interesting occasion to retouch a harp which I will not say, with Tasso, — oppressed by misfortunes and years, — has been hung up upon a cypress, but which has, however, for some time been laid aside.

I have the honour to be, with sincere respect,

Faithfully, your most obedient servant,

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH.

DCCCL

*William Wordsworth to T. Attwood Walmsley*¹

RYDAL MOUNT, May 5, 1847.

My dear Sir,

I quite agree in most of your remarks. The alterations were made in the notion, mistaken as it seems, that they might better suit your music. Be pleased to understand

¹ Of Trinity College, Cambridge. — Ed.

that you may adopt or reject any alterations as they suit you or not, and whether the note you suggest for the printed Ode¹ may be requisite we will leave to after-consideration. The only alteration that I wish to stand is *lore* instead of *path*, because it is intended to mark her *education* as a girl, the means by which she acquired a fitting knowledge of the manner in which she was to tread the path of peculiar duty when grown up. The alteration "past" and "clarion's blast"² was to get rid of the word *trumpet*, which is required near the end of the Ode, but it may be repeated if you like. I will try to supply you with the sort of chorus you wish to conclude with. I felt the need of it, but I was willing to leave the matter where it was, till I was sure that you were desirous of an addition.

The heavy domestic affliction that presses on me, the very dangerous illness of my only daughter, makes it impossible for me to exert myself satisfactorily in this task. I am, dear sir,

Yours truly,

WM. WORDSWORTH.

P.S. — Do not misunderstand the word *task*. I only feel it one in reference to the great anxiety that I have alluded to, for I was not called on to furnish the *Installation Ode* in my capacity of Laureate, but simply as a poet to whom His Royal Highness was pleased to apply on the occasion.

W. W.

¹ The *Installation Ode*. See *Poetical Works*, Vol. VIII, pp. 320-324.

² This alteration was not made. See the printed poem. — Ed.

DCCCLI

William Wordsworth to Christopher Wordsworth

July 10, 1847.

My dear Christopher,

Last night (I ought to have said a quarter before one this morning) it pleased God to take to Himself the spirit of our beloved daughter and your truly affectionate cousin. . . .

I need not write more. Your aunt bears up under this affliction as becomes a Christian.

Your affectionate uncle,

WM. WORDSWORTH.

Pray for us.

1848

DCCCLII

Mary Wordsworth to Kate Southey

Feb. 23d, [1848?]

This is a gloomy season with me — but what season *now* is not gloomy with us? . . . Mr. Wordsworth's spirits are so overwhelmed that I can fix upon nothing. . . . Never a day passes that my husband does not mourn over the injustice that has been done to your father's memory by the suppression of his invaluable works, not to speak of the injury that bad passions have caused to the fortunes of you all ; but this is even a trifle when we think how your hearts have been riven and your spirits wounded. . . . I will only add that I am ever your tender friend, and that *we* consider you as our own.

M. WORDSWORTH.

DCCCLIII

*William Wordsworth to John Pringle Nichol*¹RYDAL MOUNT, NEAR AMBLESIDE,
August, 1848.

. . . Mr. Longfellow's poem² is obviously, in meter and in manner and matter, after the model of Voss's *Louise*, a poem which used to be as popular in Germany

¹ Professor of Astronomy in the University of Glasgow. — Ed.

² *Evangeline*. — Ed.

as the metre, which does not suit modern languages, would allow. In our own language we have no spondees, and are therefore obliged to substitute trochaics, or to make spondees out of the end of one word and the beginning of the next. . . .

What a momentous obligation does the spread of the English language impose upon the persons who write in it. It has already taken the lead of the French, and will, I must hope, keep the precedence. . . .

DCCCLIV

*William Wordsworth to David Leitch, M.D.*¹

Sept. 18, 1848.

. . . It [Applethwaite²] is endeared to me by so many sacred and personal recollections that I much regretted the erection of that small mill when it took place ; and had I known of the intention, the fulfilment of which so much impaired the privacy of the place, I should have done my utmost, by purchase or otherwise, to have prevented such an intrusion. Circumstances frustrated my original intention of building at Applethwaite, and at my advanced age I am not likely to do so, but that may not be the case with some of my family.

¹ Of Portinscale, near Keswick. — Ed.

² Sir George Beaumont purchased the small property of Applethwaite, and gave it to Wordsworth in 1803. — Ed.

DCCCLV

*William Wordsworth to John Peace*BRIGHAM [Postmark, COCKERMOUTH,
Nov. 18, 1848.]

My dear Friend,

Mrs. Wordsworth has deputed to me the acceptable office of answering your friendly letter, which has followed us to Brigham, upon the banks of the river Derwent, near Cockermouth, the birthplace of four brothers and their sister. Of these four I, the second, am now the only one left. Am I wrong in supposing that you have been here? The house was driven out of its place by a railway, and stands now not nearly so advantageously for a prospect of this beautiful country, though at only a small distance from its former situation.

We are expecting Cuthbert Southey to-day from his curacy seven or eight miles distant. He is busy in carrying through the press the first volume of his father's letters, or rather collecting and preparing them for it. Do you happen to have any in your possession? If so, be so kind as to let me or his son know what they are, if you think they contain anything which would interest the public. . . .

Mrs. W. and I are, thank God, both in good health, and possessing a degree of strength beyond what is usual at our age, being both in our seventy-ninth year. The beloved daughter whom it has pleased God to remove from this anxious and sorrowful world I have not mentioned; but I can judge of the depth of your fellow-feeling for us. Many thanks to you for referring to the text

in Scripture which I quoted to you so long ago. "Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done." He who does not find support and consolation there will find it nowhere. God grant that it may be continued to me and mine, and to all sufferers ! Believe me, with Mrs. W.'s very kind remembrance,

Faithfully yours,

WM. WORDSWORTH.

1849

DCCCLVI

Edward Quillinan to Henry Crabb Robinson

LOUGHRIGG HOLME, January 12, 1849.

. . . You were unluckily gone before I returned to Rydal Mount after Hartley Coleridge's funeral. It was a bitter day. I hope you got home without accident or inconvenience. I dined at the Mount, and your cheering presence was much missed by your host and hostess, as well as by myself.

But I write to you now merely to thank you for having given me a great and unexpected pleasure by leaving with me *The Bothie of Tober-na-Vuolich*, which Mrs. Arnold, too, had recommended me to read. I was very unwilling to commence it, for I detest English hexameters, from Surrey's to Southey's; and Mr. Clough's spondaic lines are, to my ear, detestable too; that is to begin with. Yet I am really charmed with his poem. There is a great deal of mere prose in it, and the worse, to my taste, for being prose upon stilts; but, take it for all in all, there is more freshness of heart and soul and sense in it than it has been my chance to find and feel in any poem of recent date — perhaps I ought to say than in any recent poem of which the author is not yet much known; for I have no mind to depreciate Alfred Tennyson, nor any other man who has fairly won his laurel.

Mr. Wordsworth came to me to-day through snow and sleet, and sat for an hour in his most cheerful mood. Some talk about his grandchildren led him back to his own boyhood, and he related several particulars which it would have done you good to listen to ; for some of them were new to me, and probably would have been so to you. He talked, too, a good deal about the Coleridges, especially about S. T. C. If I had been inclined to Boswellise this would have been one of my days for it. He was particularly interesting. . . .

DCCCLVII

William Wordsworth to John Taylor Coleridge

RYDAL MOUNT, Feb. 19th, 1849.

. . . It must be gratifying to dear Hartley's¹ friends that from the beginning of his illness until his decease every possible care was taken of him. The affectionate kindness of his hostess and host was admirable ; and for medical advice he had all that could be wished in frequent — I might say constant — attention from Mr. Fell (his old friend), Dr. Green (recently from Dublin), Dr. Day, and Dr. Holliforth who was twenty years in full practice at Dover. Derwent took away all his books and papers and will probably write a memoir of him. . . . Hartley used to write a great deal, but rarely, I suppose, finished anything.

I cannot speak of my departed child² further than to thank you, in my own name and that of her mother, for the affectionate expression of your sympathy ; "Thy will be done" is perpetually in my thoughts. Upon that rock our consolation is built. . . .

¹ Hartley Coleridge. — Ed.² His daughter Dora. — Ed.

DCCCLVIII

Edward Quillinan to Henry Crabb Robinson

Sunday Night, October 14th, 1849.

. . . Froude has been here this summer. He was lodged, as I was informed, — for I did not see him, — at a farmhouse at or near Skelwith Bridge. Mrs. Gaskell, the author of *Mary Barton*, was also, for some weeks, in that neighbourhood, and I got Mr. Wordsworth to meet her and her husband (a Unitarian minister at Manchester). She is a very pleasing, interesting person. I cannot lay my hand, at this moment, on your former letter, to which I have only delayed replying for want of leisure, for we have been much occupied with taking visitors on walks and climbs interminable (as some of them seemed), ascents of Helvellyn, etc.

I wanted to talk to you on the subject of sonnets and sonneteers. A sonneteer, you will answer, means a writer of sonnets. You will not argue on high politics with a sonneteer! Yet it is just possible that a man may write sonnets, good or bad, and yet be as able as his neighbours to give, in plain prose, a reason for the political faith that is in him. But do you sit down, friend Crabb, and try your hand at a sonnet. That is the punishment I should like to inflict on you for your sauciness. But we will talk over the art and mystery of sonneteering at Christmas — the best season for cracking hard nuts. You are expected here — *due* here as a matter of course. Mrs. Wordsworth has two or three times, and to-day again, charged me to remind you of this. As to me, I always sing the same song (for I, too, have my constancy) — “No Crabb, no Christmas!!” But you will come about the eighteenth

of December—that is settled. Mrs. Arnold, since her return from the seaside, has had several visitors. . . .

Poor Johnny Harrison (whose name was John Wordsworth Faber), poor child! was seized with convulsion on Monday morning, the eighth of this month. Mr. Wordsworth and I attended his funeral, at Grasmere, on Friday. He is buried close to Hartley Coleridge. Who would not wish to be as fit to die at any moment as that sinless Johnny? Faber used to call him one of God's blessings to that house of Green Bank, and he was right. He kept their hearts alive to love, and pity, and tenderness. His work was done, and he was removed. You will find your old and faithful friend, the poet, pretty much as he was on your last visit. The same social cheerfulness—company cheerfulness—the same fixed despondency, uncorrected. I esteem him for both; I love him best for the latter. I have put up a beautiful headstone to Dora's grave. I wonder if you will like it. God bless you, friend Crabb! . . .

DCCCLIX

Edward Quillinan to Henry Crabb Robinson

LOUGHRIGG HOLME, October 22d, 1849.

. . . All well, though some of us are sad enough. There is, however, a gracious melancholy about autumn. I wish you could see our golden woods just now. The country was never more beautiful. . . .

DCCCLX

Mary Wordsworth to Edward Moxon

Dear Mr. Moxon,

RYDAL MOUNT, Oct. 29, 1849.

Will you thank Mrs. Moxon for her kind note?

I write to you, having seen that the first volume of Mr. Southey's letters will be published on the 1st (and also having seen that your new edition of Mr. W.'s poems will be out on that day, which will cause you to be sending a parcel) — I write to beg that you will procure us a copy of that work, and likewise a copy of the "Notes" from Mr. Southey's Place book,¹ which I suppose has been published some time. And by the same parcel send us half a dozen copies of the selections from Mr. W.'s poems.

The time is drawing on for our good friend Mr. Robinson's annual visit to us, which we always look forward to with much pleasure.

Cannot you make a Christmas holiday also and accompany him? You know we should be glad to see you, and a little of your company would be salutary to my husband. He is, thank God, quite well, and joins me in best regards to you and yours.

Believe me always, dear Mr. Moxon, to be

Sincerely yours,

M. WORDSWORTH.

DCCCLXI

Edward Quillinan to Henry Crabb Robinson

LOUGHRIGG HOLME, Nov. 12th, 1849.

. . . Some one told me, or I somewhere heard, that Dr. Channing was a weak man. I know little of him, or of his works; but from his biography and the memoirs of

¹ Common-Place Book (1849-1851). — Ed.

his life, I find him a strong, and sometimes almost a great, man. I mean in intellect and in character, for he appears to have had but a feeble frame, and that makes his mental energy the more admirable. I hug to my heart such a Unitarian as that. More of my inconsistency, you will say. But though you and I have known each other so many long years, and though I trust we are strong friends, you know me but cursorily — by snatches, as it were — or you would not think me so inconsistent.

I am not the less, nor the more, a Papist for my cordial admiration of Channing. He was really what he called himself, a liberal Christian, and thoroughly consistent, according to his views, from the commencement of his ministry to the end. The phrase uttered or written by him at a late period of his life, "I am little of a Unitarian," is but another proof of his consistency, though it has been interpreted to his prejudice. It merely meant that as he grew older he grew wiser in charity, that he was still more liberal than before to sincere Christians of all denominations, not that he was the less a Unitarian in his theology.

From him I have at last learned what is meant by a Christian Unitarian. I am not going over to you, though. "On that rock" (of Pope Peter) my faith was built, and there it stands. But I owe you the above admission for a bigoted remark that I once made to you, which your good-nature will have forgotten.

Mr. and Mrs. Wordsworth are well, and the better for expecting you soon. . . .

1850

DCCCLXII

Edward Quillinan to John Pringle Nichol

LOUGHRIGG HOLME, Saturday, March 30, 1850.

My dear Sir,

Mr. Wordsworth has been seriously ill, but we believe, from the reports of his medical attendants, that all danger is over for the present. When I saw him yesterday he seemed very languid, but he must be very weak for a long time, if it should please God to restore him, of which there is every hope.

We are reading your *Architecture of the Heavens* with great interest; and a young artist, a guest in my cottage, is so taken with Mr. David Scott's¹ illustrative designs that he is copying some of them, and very skilfully too. . . .

Yours, dear sir, very faithfully,

EDWARD QUILLINAN.

¹ A Scottish painter (1806-1849), illustrator of *The Ancient Mariner*.—Ed.

1855

DCCCLXIII

Mary Wordsworth to Correspondent Unknown

RYDAL MOUNT,

18th June, 1855 (John's 52d birthday).

My dear Friend,

The last kind message I received from you was that you would come to see me when the spring was further advanced. The months, dear friend, are now passing fast over us, and I must remind you of this promise, and tell you the sooner you perform it the better. Many of your friends you might not meet if your coming is long deferred. For instance, Mrs. Arnold, who with her daughter has been some weeks absent, is about to return only for a brief space, as a tour in Scotland is contemplated. Thither, too, Sir John and Lady Richardson are going ere long. You know probably that Sir John was sent for some weeks back, in consequence of Mrs. Fletcher's dangerous attack of illness, from which, to the surprise of every one, she rallied. I have not seen her since, but she is wonderfully well, I am told. Then the Cooksons talk of letting their house in the autumn; so, dear friend, if you long defer your coming, you will have a stupid visit. But, above all, I want to talk with you — now that I cannot read your letters, or see one word I write — about our old friends, Mrs. Clarkson, Miss Fenwick, Mrs. and Miss

Hoare, and our younger ones, not to speak of our own belongings, etc. I am now alone with Mr. Carter,¹ and we should be most glad to hear of your approach. . . .

¹ Mr. Carter was Wordsworth's clerk in the office of stamp-distributor. He also rendered assistance in the revision of the proof-sheets of his works. — Ed.

APPENDIX I

1

William Wordsworth to Correspondent Unknown

[No date.]

My dear Friend,

A few weeks ago Lord Lowther spent three days with us, and my sister and I liked him much. He has very good sense and was pleasant and cheerful in a quiet way. He is certainly very discerning in the characters of men, and seems to have no bitterness in his judgments. This contest must have been of infinite use to him. If he did not know it before, he must now perceive that much will be, and is already, required of him; and that rank and great possessions must be upheld by personal character, and a judicious attention to the interests of the people with whom he is connected, and indeed he seems disposed to give his mind seriously to the acquirement of knowledge, especially in connection with these two counties. . . .

2

William Wordsworth to [William Matthews?]

PENRITH, Jan. 7, 1794.

. . . I have been here for some time. I am still much engaged with my sick friend¹; and sorry am I to add that he worsens daily; . . . he is barely alive. . . .

¹ Raisley Calvert. — Ed.

3

William Wordsworth to Joseph Cottle

Wednesday Morning, [1797.]

Dear Cottle,

We received the £10 note, for which we are very much obliged to you. We hope we shall not want any more, but if we do we will apply to you. I write merely to request (which I have very particular reasons for doing) that you would continue to send me Dr. Darwin's *zoönomia* by the first carrier. If it is not in your power to borrow it, I wish you would send to Cote House with my compliments to John Wedgwood, and say that I should be much obliged to him if he would let me have it for ten days, at the end of which time it shall certainly be returned.

Yours truly,

W. WORDSWORTH.

4

William Wordsworth to Joseph Cottle

ALFOXDEN, Friday, August 16, 1797.

Dear Cottle,

I received the paper enclosing two guineas, which were very convenient to me. I am happy to inform you that I had no occasion to avail myself of the draft which you proposed. Thomas Poole found it in his power to let me have £25, and on my return to Racedown I found £22 had been waiting there some time, so that you will perceive I had not the least need of making use of the draft. . . .

We are now settled in this place. I trust I need not repeat how happy we shall be to see you here, and any

of your friends whom you may choose to bring along with you. My sister joins with me in most affectionate respects. Believe me, dear Cottle,

Your affectionate friend,

W. WORDSWORTH.

5

William Wordsworth to Joseph Cottle

13th September, 1797.

My dear Cottle,

I ought to have answered your last kind letter immediately. I have nothing that can be urged in my excuse, so that I must throw myself entirely upon your friendship. Your offers of pecuniary accommodation were in a very small degree less acceptable than if I had really had occasion to avail myself of them. This is not the case at present. If it should happen to be so, you may be assured I will not fail to betake myself to you. I propose to be in Bristol ere three weeks are past, when I shall have the pleasure of talking to you on books, etc. If you can manage to come over to Alfoxden before, we shall be very glad to see you. We hope your health is by this time completely reëstablished. My sister joins in affectionate remembrances.

Your sincere friend,

W. WORDSWORTH.

Coleridge is gone over to Bowles with his *Osorio*, which he had finished to the middle of the sixth act.¹ He set off a week ago.

¹ In his *Samuel Taylor Coleridge* (p. 77) Mr. Dykes Campbell says that on the sixth of September he took the tragedy to Bowles, "completed to the middle of the fifth act," and that it was "finished a month later, and sent off to Drury Lane." — Ed.

6

*William Wordsworth to James Losh*¹

ALFOXDEN, NEAR STOWEY, BRIDGEWATER,
March 11, 1798.

My dear Losh,

I have wished much to hear from you. I suppose that your marriage has not yet taken place or I should certainly have been apprised of it. I have had some fears about your health, but I have constantly banished them as soon as they came into my mind. Perhaps you have heard of the unexampled liberality of the Wedgwoods towards Coleridge; they have settled an annuity of £150 upon him for life. We are obliged to quit this place at midsummer. I have already spoken to you of its enchanting beauty. Do contrive to come and see us before we go away. Coleridge is now writing by me at the same table. I need not say how ardently he joins with me in this wish, and how deeply interested he is in anything relating to you.

We have a delightful scheme in agitation, which is rendered still more delightful by a probability which I cannot exclude from my mind that you may be induced to join in the party. We have come to a resolution—Coleridge, Mrs. Coleridge, my sister, and myself—of going into Germany, where we purpose to pass the two ensuing years in order to acquire the German language, and to furnish ourselves with a tolerable stock of information in natural science. Our plan is to settle, if possible, in a village near a University, in a pleasant, and if we can a mountainous,

¹ Addressed to James Losh, Woodside, near Carlisle, Cumberland.—Ed.

country. It will be desirable that the place should be as near as may be to Hamburg, on account of the expense of travelling. What do you say to this? I know that Cecilia Baldwin has great activity and spirit; may I venture to whisper a wish to her that she would consent to join this little colony? I have not forgotten your apprehensions from sea-sickness; there may be many other obstacles which I cannot divine. I cannot, however, suppress wishes which I have so ardently felt. Where is Tweddel? Will you have the goodness to write to him, and to request that he would inform you what places he has seen in Germany, which he thinks eligible residences for persons with such views, either for accidental or permanent advantages; also, if he could give any information respecting the prices of board, lodging, house rents, provisions, etc., upon which we should be justified in proceeding, it would be highly useful.

I have not yet seen any numbers of the *Economist*, though I requested Cottle to transmit them to me. I have been tolerably industrious within the last few weeks. I have written seven hundred and six lines of a poem which I hope to make of considerable utility. Its title will be *The Recluse; or, Views of Nature, Man, and Society*. Let me hear from you immediately. My sister begs her kind remembrances. I am, dear Losh, your affectionate friend,

W. WORDSWORTH.

7

William Wordsworth to Joseph Cottle

ALFOXDEN, 12th April, 1798.

My dear Cottle,

You will be pleased to hear that I have gone on very rapidly, adding to my stock of poetry. Do come and let me read it to you under the old trees in the park. We have a little more than two months to stay in this place. Within four days the season has advanced with greater rapidity than I ever remember, and the country becomes everywhere more lovely. God bless you !

Your affectionate friend,

W. WORDSWORTH.

8

William Wordsworth to Joseph Cottle

ALFOXDEN, 9th May, 1798.

Dear Cottle,

We look for you with great impatience. We will never forgive you if you don't come. I say nothing of the Salisbury Plain till I see you. I am determined to finish it, and equally so that you shall publish it. I have lately been busy about another plan, which I do not wish to mention till I see you. Let this be very soon, and stay a week if possible — as much longer as you can. God bless you, dear Cottle !

Yours sincerely,

W. WORDSWORTH.

9

Dorothy Wordsworth to Correspondent Unknown

BRISTOL, July 18th, 1798.

. . . William's poems are now in the press ; they will be out in six weeks. . . .

10

Dorothy Wordsworth to Correspondent Unknown

LONDON, September 13th, 1798.

. . . The poems are printed, but not published. They are in one small volume, without the name of the author ; their title is *Lyrical Ballads, with Other Poems*. Cottle has given thirty guineas for William's share of the volume ; that is for the copyright. . . .

11

William Wordsworth to Joseph Cottle

My address at Mr. Hutchinson's,
SOCKBURN, NEAR NORTHALLERTON,
YORKSHIRE, [1799.]

My dear Cottle,

The day before I left England I wrote to you to request that you would transfer your right to the *Lyrical Ballads* to Mr. Johnson, on account of its being likely to be very advantageous to me, desiring you to draw upon my brother in London for the money for which I was indebted

to you. I had not time to receive your answer, so I do not know how the poems have been disposed of. Pray let me hear from you immediately. By means of Coleridge we have heard of you, that you are well, etc. We are now in the county of Durham, just upon the borders of Yorkshire. We have spent our time pleasantly enough in Germany, but we are right glad to find ourselves in England, for we have learned to know its value.¹

We left Coleridge well at Göttingen a month ago. Dorothy joins me in kind remembrances to your mother, etc., and love to you. I am,

Yours sincerely,

W. WORDSWORTH.

12

William Wordsworth to Joseph Cottle

June 2d, [1799.]²

My dear Cottle,

Owing to your letter not having the exact address, I did not receive it till yesterday. I perceive that it would have been impossible for you to comply with my request respecting the *Lyrical Ballads*, as you had entered into a treaty with Arch.³ I still, however, regret it upon the same

¹ Compare the poem beginning, "I travelled among unknown men," stanzas 1 and 2. — Ed.

² This letter was incorrectly dated 1800 by the writer. — Ed.

³ Wordsworth's request to Cottle, in a letter dated September 15, 1798, was that he should "make over any interest in the *Lyrical Ballads* to Mr. Johnson, St. Paul's Churchyard." But Cottle tells us that he had "parted with the largest portion of the impression of five hundred copies, at a loss, to Mr. Arch, a London bookseller." — Ed.

grounds as before : namely, that I have lost a good opportunity of connecting myself with Johnson ; that I think the poems are not so likely to have a quick sale as if they were in his hands ; and also that they must necessarily be separated from anything which I may hereafter publish. You ought not to have mentioned in your letter to Johnson that the poems were *sold* to you, as I had told you that I had not acquainted him with that circumstance. Can you tell me whether the poems are likely to sell ? How is the copyright to be disposed of when you quit the bookseller's business ?

We sincerely hope that you will be rich enough, and very happy, after you have left the cares and confinement of shop-keeping. Does Robert succeed to you ?

According to my calculations you owe me twenty-one pounds, ten shillings. I think you paid me ten pounds and I was to receive thirty guineas, but I owe you for paper which I purchased from you long ago ; this debt you will be so good as to deduct from what you owe me, and remit the remainder to me as soon as you can. I should wish very much to know what number of the poems have been sold, and also (as, if the edition should sell, I shall probably add some others in lieu of *The Ancyent Marinere*) what we are to do with the copyright. I repeat this that it may not be overlooked when you write to me.

We are glad to hear that the printing business succeeds so well. It gave us much pain to hear of the increase of your lameness. You must live in the country, if possible, when you are no longer imprisoned in Wine Street. Dorothy sends her best love to you. God bless you, my dear Cottle. Believe me,

Yours affectionately,

WM. WORDSWORTH.

P.S. — If you cannot very soon remit to me the whole of the money, be so good as to send me five pounds and remit the rest as soon as you can to my broker in Staple Inn.

My address is, at Mr. Hutchinson's, Sockburn, near Northallerton, Yorkshire. To be left at Enter Common.

I am afraid I cannot have any copies of my poems without paying for them. Most likely you did not reserve to yourself the disposal of a portion of them.

I should wish to make a present of three to three of my friends. Tell me if they are to be procured, and how? God bless you, dear Cottle.

W. WORDSWORTH.

13

William Wordsworth to Joseph Cottle

June 24, 1799.

My dear Cottle,

I received your letter enclosing a five-pound bank note. I am in want of money. I shall, therefore, be obliged to you if you will remit to *me* (not to my brother as I before requested) the remaining fifteen pounds as soon as you can without inconvenience. Most probably your statement is accurate; for myself I recollect nothing about it. What I told you was from Dorothy's memory, and she is by no means certain about it. . . .

You tell me the poems have not sold ill. If it is possible, I should wish to know what number have been sold. From what I can gather it seems that *The Ancyent Marinere* has, on the whole, been an injury to the volume; I mean that the old words and the strangeness of it have deterred readers from going on. If the volume should come to a second edition, I would put in its place some little things which would be more likely to suit the common taste.

When you send the money pray look over this letter and reply to this part of it.

I shall be obliged to you if you will send me three copies of the *Ballads*, enclosed in your parcel to Charles Lloyd. I shall easily get them from Penrith.

We are highly gratified by the affectionate wish which you express to see us again in Somersetshire. We are as yet not determined where we shall settle; we have no particular house in view, so it is impossible for us to say where we shall have the pleasure of meeting you.

Dorothy sends her very kind love to you. God bless you, my dear Cottle.

Your affectionate friend,

W. WORDSWORTH.

SOCKBURN, NEAR NORTHALLERTON, YORKSHIRE.

P.S.— We have never heard from Coleridge since our arrival in England; we are anxious for news of him. I hope he is coming home, as he does not write to us.

14

Dorothy Wordsworth to Thomas Poole

SOCKBURN, 4th July [1799.]

My dear Mr. Poole,

Ever since our arrival in England it has been William's intention to write to you, yet his delaying disposition has so got the better of him that though we have been two months on English ground you have heard nothing of us from ourselves. Knowing how much you are interested in our welfare, I can no longer refrain from taking up the pen to inform you where we are, and that we are in good

health. We found living in Germany, with the enjoyment of any tolerable advantages, much more expensive than we expected, which determined us to come home with the first tolerable weather of the spring. We left Coleridge and Mr. Chester at Göttingen ten weeks ago,¹ as you probably have heard, and proceeded with as little delay as possible, travelling in a German diligence to Hamburg, whence we went down the Elbe in a boat to Cuxhaven, where we were not detained longer than we wished for our necessary refreshment, and we had an excellent passage to England of two days and nights. We proceeded immediately from Yarmouth into the North, where we are now staying with some of our early friends at a pleasant farm on the banks of the Tees. We are very anxious to hear from Coleridge, — he promised to write us from Göttingen, and though we have written twice we have heard nothing of him. We hope that, having delayed writing to us longer than he intended, he now delays because he is on the point of returning to England. When we were at Göttingen he received a letter from Mrs. Coleridge, by which we had the pleasure of hearing that she and dear little Hartley were well. Poor Berkeley.² I was much grieved to hear of his death. It gave us sincere joy to learn from Coleridge that your good mother was in better health three months ago than she had ever been for some time. I hope that we shall again have the same good accounts of her. We are yet quite undetermined where we shall reside; we have no house in view at present. It is William's wish to be near a good library, and, if possible,

¹ I.e. on April 25th. — Ed.

² The infant child of the Coleridges. He was born at Nether Stowey in May, 1798, and died while Coleridge was in Germany in February, 1799. — Ed.

in a pleasant country. If you hear of any place in your neighbourhood that will be likely to suit us, we shall be much obliged to you if you will take the trouble of writing to us. We were very glad to hear that Mr. Wedgwood is going to settle not far from Stowey.

William joins with me in kind remembrances to your mother, Mrs. Coleridge, and yourself.

I will not make any apology for this short and unenterprising letter. I know you will not receive it without pleasure. Believe me, my dear sir,

Yours affectionately,

DOROTHY WORDSWORTH.

Pray remember us to Mr. Ward, and request Coleridge to write when he arrives at Stowey.

Our address is at Mr. Hutchinson's, Sockburn, near Northallerton, Yorkshire.

15

William Wordsworth to Joseph Cottle

SOCKBURN, September 2, 1799.

. . . [He urges him to pay a visit to the North of England.] If you come down I will accompany you on your tour. Write to me beforehand. You will come by Greta Bridge, which is about twenty miles from this place. Thither Dorothy and I will go to meet you. Dorothy will return to Sockburn, and after we have seen all the curiosities of that neighbourhood, I will accompany you into Cumberland and Westmoreland. . . . God bless you, dear Cottle.

W. W.

William Wordsworth to Dorothy Wordsworth

[Probably October,] 1799.

. . . We left Cottle, as you know, at Greta Bridge.¹ We were obliged to take the mail over Stainmore, the road interesting with sun and mist. At Temple Sowerby I learned that John was at Newbigging. I sent a note; he came, looks very well, said he would accompany us a few days. Next day we set off, and dined at Mr. Myers; thence to Bampton, where we slept. On Friday proceeded along the lake of Hawes-water, a noble scene which pleased us much. The mists hung so low that we could not go directly over to Ambleside, so we went over by Long Sleddale to Kentmere, Troutbeck, Rayrigg, and Bowness; a rainy and raw day. Went to the ferry, much disgusted with the new erections about Windermere; thence to Hawkshead — great change amongst the people since we were last there. Next day by Rydal to Grasmere (Robert Newton's), where we have remained till to-day. John left us on Tuesday; we walked with him to the turn. This day was a fine one, and we had some grand mountain

¹ In his *Reminiscences* Cottle printed Wordsworth's letters to him — the originals of which are now in the Dyce Library, at South Kensington — very inaccurately, and even mixed up portions of two separate letters in one. E.g. the following is inserted in the letter of June 2d, 1799. "We [i.e. his sister and himself] were much interested with the *Anthology*. Your poem of the *Killcrop* we liked better than any; only we regretted that you did not save the poor little innocent's life by some benevolent act or other. You might have managed a little pathetic incident, in which Nature — appearing forcibly in the child — might have centred, in some way or other, upon its superstitious destroyer." — Ed.

scenery; the rest of the week has been bad weather. The evening before last we walked to the upper waterfall at Rydal, and saw it through the gloom; it was very magnificent. Coleridge was much struck with Grasmere and its neighbourhood.¹ I have much to say to you. You will think my plan a mad one, but I have thought of building a house there by the lake side. John would give me £40 to buy the ground. There is a small house at Grasmere empty² which we might take, but of this we will speak. . . .

17

William Wordsworth to Samuel Taylor Coleridge

[DOVE COTTAGE, December 25, 1799.]

We arrived here on the evening of St. Thomas's day, last Friday, and have now been four days in our new abode without writing to you — a long time! but we have been in such confusion as not to have had a moment's leisure. My dear friend, we talk of you perpetually, and for me I see you everywhere.

But let me be a little more methodical. We left Sockburn last Tuesday morning. We crossed the Tees by moonlight in the Sockburn fields, and after ten good miles' riding came in sight of the Swale. It is there a beautiful

¹ Writing to Dorothy Wordsworth and describing this tour, Coleridge spoke of "the divine sisters, Rydal and Grasmere," where he "received the deepest delight"; and in a letter written from Wastdalehead on August 4th, 1802, he refers to Thomas Tyson's house at the foot of Kirk Fell, "where W. and I slept, November three years ago," i.e. November, 1799; proving that they went on from Grasmere to Wastdale. — Ed.

² Dove Cottage. — Ed.

river, with its green bank and flat holms scattered over with trees. Four miles further brought us to Richmond, with its huge ivied castle, its friarage steeple, its castle tower resembling a huge steeple, and two other steeple towers, for such they appeared to us. The situation of this place resembles that of Barnard Castle, but I should suppose it is somewhat inferior to it. George accompanied us eight miles further, and there we parted with sorrowful hearts. We were now in Wensley Dale, and Dorothy and I set off side by side to foot it as far as Kendal.

I will not clog my letter with a description of this celebrated dale; but I must not neglect to mention that a little before sunset we reached one of the waterfalls of which I read you a short descripton in Mr. Taylor's tour. It is a singular scene; I meant to have given you some account of it, but I feel myself too lazy to execute the task. 'Tis such a performance as you might have expected from some giant gardener employed by one of Queen Elizabeth's courtiers, if this same giant gardener had consulted with Spenser, and they two had finished the work together. By this you will understand that it is at once formal and wild. We reached Askrigg — twelve miles — before six in the evening, having been obliged to walk the last two miles over hard frozen roads, to the great annoyance of our ankles and feet. Next morning the earth was thinly covered with snow, enough to make the road soft and prevent its being slippery.

On leaving Askrigg we turned aside to see another waterfall. It was a beautiful morning, with driving snow showers which disappeared by fits and unveiled the east, which was all one delicious pale orange colour. After walking through two small fields we came to a mill, which

we passed ; and in a moment a sweet little valley opened before us, with an area of grassy ground, and a stream dashing over various laminae of black rocks, close under a bank covered with firs, — the bank and stream on our left, another woody bank on our right, and the flat meadow in front, from which, as at Buttermere, the stream had retired as it were to hide itself under the shade. As we walked up this delightful valley we were tempted to look back perpetually on the stream, which reflected the orange lights of the morning among the gloomy rocks, with a brightness varying with the agitation of the current.

The steeple of Askrigg was between us and the east, at the bottom of the valley; it was not a quarter of a mile distant, but oh, how far we were from it ! The two banks seemed to join before us with a facing of rock common to them both. When we reached this bottom the valley opened out again, — two rocky banks on each side, which, hung with ivy and moss, and fringed luxuriantly with brushwood, ran directly parallel to each other, and then approaching with a gentle curve at their point of union presented a lofty waterfall, the termination of the valley. It was a keen, frosty morning, showers of snow threatening us, but the sun bright and active. We had a task of twenty-one miles to perform in a short winter's day. All this put our minds into such a state of excitation that we were no unworthy spectators of this delightful scene. On a nearer approach the waters seemed to fall down a tall arch or niche that had shaped itself by insensible moulderings in the wall of an old castle. We left this spot with reluctance, but highly exhilarated.

When we had walked about a mile and a half we overtook two men with a string of ponies and some empty carts. I recommended to Dorothy to avail herself of this

opportunity of husbanding her strength; we rode with them more than two miles. 'T was bitter cold, the wind driving the snow behind us in the best style of a mountain storm. We soon reached an inn at a place called Hard-rane, and descending from our vehicles, after warming ourselves by the cottage fire, we walked up the brook-side to take a view of a third waterfall. We had not walked above a few hundred yards between two winding rocky banks before we came full upon the waterfall, which seemed to throw itself in a narrow line from a lofty wall of rock, the water, which shot manifestly to some distance from the rock, seeming to be dispersed into a thin shower scarcely visible before it reached the basin. We were disappointed in the cascade itself, though the introductory and accompanying banks were an exquisite mixture of grandeur and beauty.

We walked up to the fall; and what would I not give if I could convey to you the feelings and images which were then communicated to me! After cautiously sounding our way over stones of all colours and sizes, encased in the clearest water formed by the spray of the fall, we found the rock, which before had appeared like a wall, extending itself over our heads, like the ceiling of a huge cave, from the summit of which the waters shot directly over our heads into a basin; and among fragments wrinkled over with masses of ice as white as snow, or rather, as Dorothy says, like congealed froth. The water fell at least ten yards from us, and we stood directly behind it, the excavation not so deep in the rock as to impress any feeling of darkness, but lofty and magnificent; but, in connection with the adjoining banks, it excluded as much of the sky as could well be spared from a scene so exquisitely beautiful.

The spot where we stood was as dry as the chamber in which I am now sitting, and the incumbent rock, of which the groundwork was limestone, was veined and dappled with colours which melted into each other with every possible variety of colour. On the summit of the cave were three festoons, or rather wrinkles, in the rock, run up parallel like the folds of a curtain when it is drawn up. Each of these was hung with icicles of various lengths, and nearly in the middle of the festoon in the deepest valley of the waves that ran parallel to each other the stream shot from the rows of icicles in irregular fits of strength, and with a body of water that varied every moment. Sometimes the stream shot into the basin in one continued current; sometimes it was interrupted almost in the midst of its fall, and was blown like the heaviest thunder-shower towards part of the waterfall at no great distance from our feet.

In such a situation you have at every moment a feeling of the presence of the sky. Large, fleecy clouds drove over our heads above the rush of the water, and the sky appeared of a blue more than usually brilliant. The rocks on each side, which, joining with the side of this cave formed the vista of the brook, were chequered with three diminutive waterfalls, or rather courses of water. Each of these was a miniature of all that summer and winter can produce of delicate beauty. The rock in the centre of the falls, where the water was most abundant, was a deep black, the adjoining parts yellow, white, purple, and dove-colour, covered with water-plants of the most vivid green, and hung with streaming icicles that in some places seem to conceal the verdure of the plants and the violet and yellow variegation of the rocks, and in some places render the colours more brilliant.

I cannot express to you the enchanting effect produced by this Arabian scene of colour as the wind blew aside the great waterfall behind which we stood and alternately hid and revealed each of these fairy cataracts in irregular succession, or displayed them with various gradations of distinctness as the intervening spray was thickened or dispersed. What a scene, too, in summer! In the luxury of our imagination we could not help feeding upon the pleasure which this cave, in the heat of a July noon, would spread through a frame exquisitely sensible. That huge rock on the right, the bank winding round on the left with all its living foliage, and the breeze stealing up the valley, and bedewing the cavern with the freshest imaginable spray; and then the murmur of the water, the quiet, the seclusion, and a long summer day!

18

*William Wordsworth to Some Friends*¹

[1801?]

[Referring to his poem, *Resolution and Independence*, he says:]

. . . It is not a matter of indifference whether you are pleased with his² figure and employment (it may be comparatively whether you are pleased with this poem); but it is of the utmost importance that you should have had pleasure in contemplating the fortitude, independence, persevering spirit, and general moral dignity of this old man's character. . . . I will explain to you, in prose, my

¹ Quoted thus in *Memoirs of William Wordsworth* (1851), p. 166. No indication is given of who the friends were. — Ed.

² The leech-gatherer's. — Ed.

feelings in writing that poem. . . . I describe myself as having been exalted to the highest pitch of delight by the joyousness and beauty of Nature ; and then as depressed, even in the midst of these beautiful objects, to the lowest dejection and despair. A young poet, in the midst of the happiness of Nature, is described as overwhelmed by the thoughts of the miserable reverses which have befallen the happiest of all men, viz. poets. I think of this till I am so deeply impressed with it that I consider the manner in which I was rescued from my dejection and despair almost as an interposition of Providence. A person reading the poem with feelings like mine will have been awed and controlled, expecting something spiritual or supernatural. What is brought forward? A lonely place, "a pond by which an old man was, far from all house or home" ; not stood nor sat, but *was* — the figure presented in the most naked simplicity possible. This feeling of spirituality or supernaturalism is again referred to as being strong in my mind in this passage. How came he here? thought I, or what can he be doing? I then describe him, whether ill or well is not for me to judge with perfect confidence ; but this I can confidently affirm, that, though I believe God has given me a strong imagination, I cannot conceive a figure more impressive than that of an old man like this, the survivor of a wife and ten children, travelling alone among the mountains and all lonely places, carrying with him his own fortitude and the necessities which an unjust state of society has laid upon him. You speak of his speech as tedious. Everything is tedious when one does not read with the feelings of the author. *The Thorn* is tedious to hundreds ; and so is *The Idiot Boy* to hundreds. It is in the character of the old man to tell his story, which an impatient

reader must feel tedious. But, good Heavens ! such a figure, in such a place ; a pious, self-respecting, miserably infirm, and pleased old man telling such a tale !

Your feelings upon the "mother and the boy with the butterfly"¹ were not indifferent ; it was an affair of whole continents of moral sympathy.

I am, for the most part, uncertain about my success in altering poems ; but in this case² I am sure I have produced a great improvement. . . .

19

Dorothy Wordsworth to Mrs. Marshall

GALLOW HILL, September 29th, 1802.

. . . We were detained in London by a succession of unexpected events,—the arrival of my brother Christopher, then of my brother John. . . . We leave Gallow Hill on Monday morning, immediately after my brother William's marriage. We expect to reach Grasmere on Wednesday evening. William, Mary, and I go together in a post-chaise; and after Mr. Hutchinson's harvest is over (when we shall have got completely settled in our own house) he and his sister Sarah will follow us, and spend some time at Grasmere and Keswick. . . .

I half dread that concentration of all tender feelings, past, present, and future, which will come upon me on the wedding morning. There never lived on earth a better woman than Mary Hutchinson.

¹ This must refer to the poem *Beggars*. See stanza iv. — Ed.

² Wordsworth's nephew and biographer, quoting this letter, has introduced the clause, "speaking of an insertion" ; but he does not state what the insertion is, or mention the poem referred to. — Ed.

It was delightful to see all our brothers, particularly John, after his return from India. He was in perfect health and excellent spirits. We spent two days with my uncle and aunt Cookson at Windsor. We did not see the Nicholsons. I knew that Caroline¹—whom I would have liked dearly to see, and whom I love and respect very much—was at Guildford, and I guessed that the rest of the family were there, it being the time of year in which they always are. Therefore I did not attempt to seek out their house. . . . There is every prospect of a settlement of our affairs with Lord Lowther, entirely to our satisfaction. . . .

20

William Wordsworth to Correspondent Unknown

[1802.]

[In November, 1802, John Wordsworth (who had taken Anderson's *Poets* with him on his previous voyage and now gave them to William) wrote to his brother asking what books he should take on a sixteen months' voyage. William replied to a correspondent unknown as follows:]

Tell John when he buys Spenser to purchase an edition which has his *View of the State of Ireland* in it. This is in prose. The edition may be scarce, but one surely can be found.

Milton's sonnets—transcribe all this for John, as said by me to him—I think manly, dignified compositions, distin-

¹ See the footnote to the sonnet beginning, "It is a beauteous evening, calm and free," *Poetical Works*, Eversley edition, Vol. II, p. 335. See also Dorothy Wordsworth's *Journals*, Vol. I, p. 146.—Ed.

guished by simplicity and unity of object and aim, and undisfigured by false or vicious ornaments. They are in several places incorrect, and sometimes uncouth in language ; and, perhaps, in some inharmonious. Yet, upon the whole, I think the music exceedingly well suited to the end ; that is, it has an energetic and varied flow of sound, crowding into narrow room more of the combined effect of rhyme and blank verse than can be done by any other kind of verse I know of. The sonnets of Milton which I like best are those *To Cyriack Skinner, On his Blindness, Captain or Colonel, Massacre of Piedmont, Cromwell* (except the two last lines), *Fairfax*.¹ . . .

21

William Wordsworth to Walter Scott

GRASMERE, Oct. 16, 1803.

We had a delightful journey home, delightful weather, and a sweet country to travel through. We reached our little cottage in high spirits and thankful to God for all his bounties. My wife and child were both well ; and, as I need not say, we had all of us a happy meeting. . . . We passed Braxholme — your Braxholme, we supposed — about four miles on this side of Hawick. It looks better in your poem than in its present realities. The

¹ As Wordsworth does not give all the titles accurately (and some of Milton's sonnets had none), the five he refers to — and the first line when no title was given — are printed below.

1. To Mr. Cyriack Skinner. Upon his Blindness.
2. *Captain or Colonel, or Knight in arms.*
3. On the Late Massacre in Piedmont.
4. To Oliver Cromwell.
5. To my Lord Fairfax. — Ed.

situation, however, is delightful, and makes amends for an ordinary mansion. The whole of the Teviot, and the pastoral steepes about Mosspaul,¹ pleased us exceedingly. The Esk, below Langholm, is a delicious river, and we saw it to great advantage. We did not omit noticing Johnnie Armstrong's keep ; but his hanging-place, to our great regret, we missed. We were, indeed, most truly sorry that we could not have you along with us into Westmoreland. The country was in its full glory ; the verdure of the valleys, in which we are so much superior to you in Scotland, but little tarnished by the weather ; and the trees putting on their most beautiful looks. My sister was quite enchanted, and we often said to each other, "What a pity Mr. Scott is not with us !" . . . I had the pleasure of seeing Coleridge and Southey at Keswick last Sunday. Southey, whom I never saw much of before, I liked much. He is very pleasant in his manner, and a man of great reading in old books, poetry, chronicles, memoirs, etc., particularly Spanish and Portuguese. . . . My sister and I often talk of the happy days we spent in your company. Such things do not occur often in life. If we live, we shall meet again. That is my consolation when I think of these things. Scotland and England sound like division, do what we can ; but we really are neighbours, and if you were no further off, and in Yorkshire, we should think so. Farewell ! God prosper you, and all that belongs to you ! Your sincere friend — for such I will call myself, though slow to use a word of such solemn meaning to any one —

W. WORDSWORTH.

¹ Between Hawick and Langholm. — Ed.

William Wordsworth to Richard Sharp

GRASMERE, April 29, 1804.

My dear Sir,

I have long considered myself as owing you a letter, though Coleridge was so good as to be my amanuensis some time ago, and expressed my acknowledgments of your kindness in writing to me and your present of the *Minstrelsy of the Border*. You did flatter me with a sort of hope that I should receive from you a manuscript poem of your own, which I have expected with no little eagerness. My sister writes to Charles Lamb to-day. . . .

Among the many inducements which I have had to write to you, a wish to return the thanks of my family, joined with my own for your kindness — and more than kindness — to our dear and honoured friend Coleridge, during his late residence in town, has not been the least. He spoke in the warmest terms of the many affectionate attentions he received from you; and believe me, dear sir, it gave me the greatest pleasure to think — not only on his account, but on yours also — that such an intercourse had taken place between you; as I am sure nothing could be more grateful to your heart than to be useful to such a man, going upon an errand in which all his friends must be deeply interested. I need not say how much our fireside has suffered upon the melancholy occasion, and what a loss he will be to us. We are indebted to you for a world of pleasure in our Scotch tour¹; the how, the when, and the where I will explain when we have the satisfaction of

¹ He probably refers to suggestions made by Sharp of places to be visited during the tour. — Ed.

seeing you here again. . . . The leaves which ought to have been out a month ago are now budding fast, and our little orchard is in the full height of its primrose beauty. Summer will soon be here ; and, as I take for granted you don't mean to expose yourself to be kidnapped in Germany, and most other parts of the continent are probably too distant for your limited tour, we may look forward with some confidence to the pleasure of seeing you here. You will be very welcome ; and I have made some discoveries in Grasmere, which I shall be delighted to show you, little unthought-of nooks, that are as beautiful as they are shy.

You will perhaps see in the London papers an estate at Troutbeck advertised for sale. It consists of a furnished cottage — a decent sort of a house for this country, that is, considerably better than mine — and thirty acres of land. The house is on the side of Troutbeck Vale, opposite to your chosen spot and about a mile further up the valley, but in every respect inferior to yours ; no view of Windermere, and in my opinion by no means an eligible situation. It is at present occupied by Mr. Ibbetson, the painter.

I have been very busy these last ten weeks, having written between two and three thousand lines — accurately near three thousand — in that time ; namely, four books, and a third of another, of the poem which I believe I mentioned to you on my own early life.¹ I am at present in the seventh book of this work, which will turn out far longer than I ever dreamed of. It seems a frightful deal to say about myself ; and, of course, will never be published — during my lifetime, I mean² — till another work

¹ *The Prelude*. — Ed.

² It was not published till 1851, the year after his death. — Ed.

has been written and published of sufficient importance to justify me in giving my own history to the world. I pray God to give me life to finish these works, which, I trust, will live, and do good ; especially the one to which that, which I have been speaking of as far advanced, is only supplementary.¹ Farewell. Remember me kindly to Mr. Rogers, and believe me, with best regards from my wife and sister, and with the greatest esteem and respect on my part,

Yours sincerely,

W. WORDSWORTH.

23

William Wordsworth to Sir George Beaumont

GRASMERE, Feb. 11, 1805.

My dear Friend,

The public papers will already have broken the shock which the sight of this letter will give you. You will have learned by them the loss of the Earl of Abergavenny, East-Indiaman, and along with her of a great proportion of the crew, and her captain, our brother. A most beloved brother he was. This calamitous news we received at two o'clock to-day, and I write to you from a house of mourning. My poor sister, and my wife, who loved him almost as we did (for he was one of the most amiable of men), are in miserable affliction, which I do all in my power to alleviate; but Heaven knows I want consolation myself. I can say nothing higher of my ever-dear brother than that he was worthy of his sister, who is now weeping beside me, and of the friendship of Coleridge, —

¹ He refers to *The Excursion*. — Ed.

meek, affectionate, silently enthusiastic, loving all quiet things, and a poet in everything but words.

Alas! what is human life! This present moment, I thought this morning, would have been devoted to the pleasing employment of writing a letter to amuse you in your confinement. I had singled out several little fragments (descriptions merely), which I purposed to have transcribed from my poems, thinking that the perusal of them might give you a few minutes' gratification; and now I am called to this melancholy office.

I shall never forget your goodness in writing so long and interesting a letter to me under such circumstances. This letter also arrived by the same post which brought the unhappy tidings of my brother's death, so that they were both put into my hands at the same moment. . . .

Your affectionate friend,

W. WORDSWORTH.

I shall do all in my power to sustain my sister under her sorrow, which is, and long will be, bitter and poignant. We did not love him as a brother merely, but as a man of original mind, and an honour to all about him. Oh! dear friend, forgive me for talking thus. We have had no tidings of Coleridge. I tremble for the moment when he is to hear of my brother's death; it will distress him to the heart,—and his poor body cannot bear sorrow. He loved my brother, and he knows how we at Grasmere loved him.

24

William Wordsworth to Robert Southey

GRASMERE, Tuesday Evening, [Feb. 12,] 1805.

We see nothing here that does not remind us of our dear brother; there is nothing about us (save the children, whom he had not seen) that he has not known and loved.

If you could bear to come to this house of mourning to-morrow, I should be forever thankful. We weep much to-day, and that relieves us. As to fortitude, I hope I shall show that, and that all of us will show it, in a proper time, in keeping down many a silent pang hereafter. But grief will, as you say, and must, have its course; there is no wisdom in attempting to check it under the circumstances which we are all of us in here.

I condole with you, from my soul, on the melancholy account of your own brother's situation; God grant you may not hear such tidings! Oh! it makes the heart groan, that, with such a beautiful world as this to live in, and such a soul as that of man's is by nature and gift of God, we should go about on such errands as we do, destroying and laying waste; and ninety-nine of us in a hundred never easy in any road that travels towards peace and quietness! And yet, what virtue and what goodness, what heroism and courage, what triumphs of disinterested love everywhere; and human life, after all, what is it! Surely, this is not to be forever, even on this perishable planet! Come to us to-morrow, if you can; your conversation, I know, will do me good. . . .

All send best remembrances to you all.

Your affectionate friend,

W. WORDSWORTH.

25

William Wordsworth to Sir George Beaumont

GRASMERE, Feb. 20, 1805.

. . . Having spoken of worldly affairs, let me again mention my beloved brother. It is now just five years since, after a separation of fourteen — I may call it a separation, for we only saw him four or five times, and by glimpses — that he came to visit his sister and me in this cottage, and passed eight blessed months with us. He was then waiting for the command of the ship to which he was appointed when he quitted us. As you will have seen, we had little to live upon, and he as little (Lord Lonsdale being then alive). But he encouraged me to persist, and to keep my eye steady on its object. He would work for me (that was his language) — for me and his sister; and I was to endeavour to do something for the world.

He went to sea, as commander, with this hope; his voyage was very unsuccessful, he having lost by it considerably. When he came home, we chanced to be in London, and saw him. "Oh!" said he, "I have thought of you, and nothing but you; if ever of myself and my bad success, it was only on your account." He went to sea a second time, and was again unsuccessful, still with the same hopes on our account, though then not so necessary, Lord Lowther having paid the money. Lastly came the lamentable voyage, which he entered upon full of expectation, and of love to his sister and myself and my wife, whom, indeed, he loved with all a brother's tenderness. This is the end of his part of the agreement, of his efforts for my welfare! God grant me life and strength to fulfil mine!

I shall never forget him, never lose sight of him. There is a bond between us yet, the same as if he were living, —

nay, far more sacred, — calling upon me to do my utmost, as he to the last did his utmost, to live in honour and worthiness. Some of the newspapers carelessly asserted that he did not wish to survive his ship. This is false. He was heard by one of the surviving officers giving orders, with all possible calmness, a very little before the ship went down; and when he could remain at his post no longer, then, and not till then, he attempted to save himself. I knew this would be so, but it was satisfactory for me to have it confirmed by external evidence. Do not think our grief unreasonable. Of all human beings whom I ever knew he was the man of the most rational desires, the most sedate habits, and the most perfect self-command. He was modest and gentle, and shy even to disease; but this was wearing off. In everything his judgments were sound and original; his taste in all the arts — music and poetry in particular (for these he, of course, had had the best opportunities of being familiar with) — was exquisite; and his eye for the beauties of nature was as fine and delicate as ever poet or painter was gifted with, — in some discriminations, owing to his education and way of life, far superior to any person's I ever knew. But, alas! what avails it? It was the will of God that he should be taken away. . . .

I trust in God that I shall not want fortitude; but my loss is great and irreparable. . . .

Many thanks for the offer of your house; but I am not likely to be called to town. Lady Beaumont gives us hope we may see you next summer; this would, indeed, be great joy to us all. My sister thanks Lady B. for her affectionate remembrance of her and her letter, and will write as soon as ever she feels herself able.

Your most affectionate friend,

W. WORDSWORTH.

26

William Wordsworth to Sir George Beaumont

GRASMERE, March 12, 1805.

. . . As I have said, your last letter affected me much. A thousand times have I asked myself, as your tender sympathy led me to do, "Why was he taken away?" and I have answered the question as you have done. In fact, there is no other answer which can satisfy and lay the mind at rest. Why have we a choice, and a will, and a notion of justice and injustice, enabling us to be moral agents? Why have we sympathies that make the best of us so afraid of inflicting pain and sorrow, which yet we see dealt about so lavishly by the supreme Governor? Why should our notions of right towards each other, and to all sentient beings within our influence, differ so widely from what appears to be His notion and rule, if everything were to end here?

Would it not be blasphemy to say that, upon the supposition of the thinking principle being destroyed by death, however inferior we may be to the great Cause and Ruler of things, we have more of love in our nature than He has?¹ The thought is monstrous; and yet how to get rid of it, except upon the supposition of another and a better world, I do not see. As to my departed brother, who leads our minds at present to these reflections, he walked all his life pure among many impure. Except a little hastiness of temper, when anything was done in a clumsy or bungling manner, or when improperly contradicted upon occasions of not much importance, he had not

¹ Compare Robert Browning's *Saul*. — Ed.

one vice of his profession. I never heard an oath, or even an indelicate expression or allusion, from him in my life ; his modesty was equal to that of the purest woman. In prudence, in meekness, in self-denial, in fortitude, in just desires and elegant and refined enjoyments, with an entire simplicity of manners, life, and habit, he was all that could be wished for in man ; strong in health and of a noble person, with every hope about him that could render life dear, thinking of and living only for others ; and we see what has been his end ! So good must be better ; so high must be destined to be higher. . . .

I will take this opportunity of saying that the newspaper accounts of the loss of the ship are throughout grossly inaccurate. The chief facts I will state, in a few words, from the deposition at the India House of one of the surviving officers. She struck at five P.M. Guns were fired immediately, and were continued to be fired. She was gotten off the rock at half-past seven, but had taken in so much water, in spite of constant pumping, as to be water-logged. They had, however, hope that she might still be run upon Weymouth Sands, and with this view continued pumping and bailing till eleven, when she went down. The long-boat could not be hoisted out, as, had that been done, there would have been no possibility of the ship being run aground. I have mentioned these things because the newspaper accounts were such as tended to throw discredit on my brother's conduct and personal firmness, stating that the ship had struck an hour and a half before guns were fired, and that, in the agony of the moment, the boats had been forgotten to be hoisted out. We knew well this could not be ; but for the sake of the relatives of the persons lost it distressed us much that it should have been said.

A few minutes before the ship went down my brother was seen talking with the first mate, with apparent cheerfulness; and he was standing on the hen-coop, which is the point from which he could overlook the whole ship, the moment she went down, dying, as he had lived, in the very place and point where his duty stationed him.

I must beg your pardon for detaining you so long on this melancholy subject; and yet it is not altogether melancholy, for what nobler spectacle can be contemplated than that of a virtuous man, with a serene countenance, in such an overwhelming situation? I will here transcribe a passage which I met with the other day in a review; it is from Aristotle's synopsis of the virtues and vices. "It is," he says, "the property of fortitude not to be easily terrified by the dread of things pertaining to death; to possess good confidence in things terrible, and presence of mind in dangers; rather to prefer to be put to death worthily, than to be preserved basely; and to be the cause of victory. Moreover, it is the property of fortitude to labour and endure, and to make valorous exertion an object of choice. Further, presence of mind, a well-disposed soul, confidence, and boldness are the attendants on fortitude; and, besides these, industry and patience." Except in the circumstance of making valorous exertion an "object of choice" (if the philosopher alludes to general habits of character), my brother might have sat for this picture; but he was of a meek and retired nature, loving all quiet things. I remain, dear Sir George,

Your most affectionate friend,

W. WORDSWORTH.

William Wordsworth to Correspondent Unknown

GRASMERE, March 16, 1805.

He wrote to us from Portsmouth about twelve days before this disaster, full of hope, saying that he was to sail to-morrow. Of course, at the time when we heard this deplorable news we imagined that he was as far on his voyage as Madeira. It was, indeed, a thunderstroke to us! The language which he held was always so encouraging, saying that ships were, in nine instances out of ten, lost by mismanagement: he had, indeed, a great fear of pilots, and I have often heard him say that no situation could be imagined more distressing than that of being at the mercy of these men. "Oh!" said he, "it is a joyful hour for us when we get rid of them!" His fears, alas! were too well founded; his own ship was lost while under the management of the pilot, whether mismanaged by him or not, I do not know; but I know for certain — which is, indeed, our great consolation — that our dear brother did all that man could do, even to the sacrifice of his own life. The newspaper accounts were grossly inaccurate; indeed, that must have been obvious to any person who could bear to think upon the subject, for they were absolutely unintelligible. There are two pamphlets upon the subject, — one a mere transcript from the papers; the other may be considered, as to all important particulars, as of authority; it is by a person high in the India House, and contains the deposition of the surviving officers concerning the loss of the ship. The pamphlet, I am told, is most unfeelingly written: I have only seen an extract from it, containing Gilpin's deposition, the fourth mate. From

this it appears that everything was done that could be done, under the circumstances, for the safety of the lives and the ship. My poor brother was standing on the hen-coop (which is placed upon the poop, and is the most commanding situation in the vessel) when she went down, and he was thence washed overboard by a large sea, which sank the ship. He was seen struggling with the waves some time afterwards, having laid hold, it is said, of a rope. He was an excellent swimmer; but what could it avail in such a sea, encumbered with his clothes, and exhausted in body, as he must have been!

For myself, I feel that there is something cut out of my life which cannot be restored. I never thought of him but with hope and delight; we looked forward to the time, not distant as we thought, when he would settle near us, — when the task of his life would be over, and he would have nothing to do but reap his reward. I hoped also that by that time the chief part of my labours would be executed, and that I should be able to show him that he had not placed a false confidence in me. I never wrote a line without a thought of its giving him pleasure; my writings, printed and manuscript, were his delight and one of the chief solaces of his long voyages. But let me stop: I will not be cast down; were it only for his sake I will not be dejected. I have much yet to do, and pray God to give me strength and power: his part of the agreement between us is brought to an end, mine continues; and I hope, when I shall be able to think of him with a calmer mind, that the remembrance of him dead will even animate me more than the joy which I had in him living. I wish you would procure the pamphlet I have mentioned; you may know the right one, by its having a motto from Shakespeare, from Clarence's dream. I wish you to see it,

that you may read G.'s statement, and be enabled, if the affair should ever be mentioned in your hearing, to correct the errors which they must have fallen into who have taken their ideas from the newspaper accounts. I have dwelt long, too long I fear, upon this subject, but I could not write to you upon anything else till I had unburthened my heart. We have great consolations from the sources you allude to; but, alas! we have much yet to endure. Time only can give us regular tranquillity. We neither murmur nor repine, but sorrow we must; we should be senseless else.

28

Dorothy Wordsworth to Mrs. Marshall

GRASMERE, March 16, 1805.

. . . It does me good to weep for him, and it does me good to find that others weep, and I bless them for it. . . . It is with me when I write, as when I am walking out in this vale, once so full of joy; I can turn to no object that does not remind me of our loss. I see nothing that he would not have loved and enjoyed. . . . My consolations rather come to me in gusts of feeling than are the quiet growth of my mind. I know it will not always be so. The time will come when the light of the setting sun upon these mountain tops will be as heretofore a pure joy; not the same *gladness*,—that can never be,—but yet a joy even more tender. It will soothe me to know how happy he would have been could he have seen the same beautiful spectacle.

He was taken away in the freshness of his manhood; pure he was, and innocent as a child. Never human being

was more thoroughly modest, and his courage I need not speak of. He was "seen speaking with apparent cheerfulness to the first mate a few minutes before the ship went down"; and when nothing more could be done he said, "The will of God be done." I have no doubt that when he felt that it was out of his power to save his life he was as calm as before, if some thought of what we should endure did not awaken a pang.

He loved solitude, and he rejoiced in society. He would wander alone amongst these hills with his fishing-rod, or led on by the mere pleasure of walking, for many hours; or he would walk with W. or me, or both of us, and was continually pointing out — with a gladness which is seldom seen but in very young people — something which perhaps would have escaped our observation; for he had so fine an eye that no distinction was unnoticed by him, and so tender a feeling that he never noticed anything in vain. Many a time has he called out to me at evening to look at the moon or stars, or a cloudy sky, or this vale in the quiet moonlight; but the stars and moon were his chief delight. He made of them his companions when at sea, and was never tired of those thoughts which the silence of the night fed in him. Then he was so happy by the fire-side. Any little business of the house interested him. He loved our cottage. He helped us to furnish it, and to make the garden. Trees are growing now which he planted.

He stayed with us till the 29th of September, having come to us about the end of January. During that time Mary Hutchinson, now Mary Wordsworth, stayed with us six weeks. John used to walk with her everywhere, and they were exceedingly attached to each other; and so my poor sister mourns with us, not merely because we have

lost one who was so dear to William and me, but from tender love to John and an intimate knowledge of him. Her hopes as well as ours were fixed on John. . . . I can think of nothing but of our departed brother, yet I am very tranquil to-day. I honour him, and love him, and glory in his memory. . . .

29

William Wordsworth to Richard Sharp

GRASMERE, March 19, 1805.

My dear Friend,

You have often been in my thoughts lately, and I have often thought of writing to you, but my heart failed me. No doubt your thoughts, too, must frequently have turned this way. I half hoped you might have learned something concerning the ship, or my brother's conduct, which you might deem consolatory enough to encourage you to write to us. I have now and then, in my distress, turning here and turning there, a thought of this kind; and then I said to myself, What can he write, or what can anybody write to us?

Poor, blind creatures that we are! how he hoped and struggled, and we hoped and struggled, to procure him this voyage. He wrote to us from Portsmouth in the highest spirits, and then came those dismal tidings! Oh, my dear friend, no words can express the anguish which we have endured. Our brother was the pride and delight of our hearts, never present to our minds but as an object of hope and pleasure; we had no expectation in life a thousand part so pleasing as that of his coming to live among us the life he loved, and reap the reward of his long privations.

I will not speak of him now, but if you and I ever see each other again you will permit me to tell you what he was, and how he loved those that were about me, and what it was his wish to have done for us. I am afraid you will find us much changed when you come again to Grasmere. My sister has been stricken to the heart, and looks dismally ill; but I hope time will calm us. Let us see you this summer, if possible. We shall make a little tour into Scotland, if we can muster courage; but alas! every plan and scheme at this time only presents to us variety of sorrow. . . .

Your sincere friend,

W. WORDSWORTH.

30

William Wordsworth to Lord Lonsdale

GRASMERE, May 25, [1809.]

My Lord,

. . . I had also another reason for deferring this acknowledgment to your Lordship, viz., that at the same time I wished to present to you a tract which I have lately written and which I hope you have now received. It was finished, and ought to have appeared, two months ago, but has been delayed by circumstances (connected with my distance from the press) over which I had no control. If this tract should so far interest your Lordship as to induce you to peruse it, I do not doubt that it will be thoughtfully and candidly judged by you; in which case I fear no censure but that which every man is liable to who, with good intentions, may have occasionally fallen into error; while at the same time I have an entire confidence that the principles which I have endeavoured to

uphold must have the sanction of a mind distinguished, like that of your Lordship, for regard to morality and religion and the true dignity and honour of your country. . . .

I have the honour to be, my Lord,

Your Lordship's most obedient servant,

W. WORDSWORTH.

31

William Wordsworth to Bernard Barton

RYDAL MOUNT, NEAR AMBLESIDE,

Jan. 12, 1816.

Dear Sir,

Though my sister, during my absence, has returned thanks in my name for the verses which you have done me the honour of addressing to me, and for the obliging letter which accompanies them, I feel it incumbent on me, on my return home, to write a few words to the same purpose with my own hand.

It is always a satisfaction to me to learn that I have given pleasure upon rational grounds ; and I have nothing to object to your poetical panegyric but the occasion which called it forth. An admirer of my works, zealous as you have declared yourself to be, condescends too much when he gives way to an impulse proceeding from the ———, or indeed from any other Review. The writers in these publications, while they prosecute their inglorious employment, cannot be supposed to be in a state of mind very favourable for being affected by the finer influences of a thing so pure as genuine poetry ; and as to the instance which has incited you to offer me this

tribute of your gratitude, though I have not seen it, I doubt not but that it is a splenetic effusion of the conductor of that Review who has taken a perpetual retainer from his own incapacity to plead against my claims to public approbation.

I differ from you in thinking that the only poetical lines in your address are "stolen from myself." The best verse, perhaps, is the following :

Awfully mighty in his impotence,

which, by way of repayment, I may be tempted to steal from you on some future occasion.

It pleases, though it does not surprise me, to learn that, having been affected early in life by my verses, you have returned again to your old loves after some little infidelities, which you were shamed into by commerce with the scribbling and chattering part of the world. I have heard of many who, upon their first acquaintance with my poetry, have had much to get over before they could thoroughly relish it ; but never of one who, having once learned to enjoy it, had ceased to value it or survived his admiration. This is as good an external assurance as I can desire that my inspiration is from a pure source, and that my principles of composition are trustworthy.

With many thanks for your good wishes, and begging leave to offer mine in return, I remain, dear sir,

Respectfully yours,

WM. WORDSWORTH.

William Wordsworth to Robert Southey

[1816.]

My dear Southey,

I am much of your mind in respect to my ode. Had it been a hymn, uttering the sentiments of a multitude, a stanza would have been indispensable. But though I have called it a *Thanksgiving Ode*, strictly speaking it is not so, but a poem composed or supposed to be composed on the morning of the thanksgiving, uttering the sentiments of an individual upon that occasion. It is a dramatised ejaculation; and this, if anything can, must excuse the irregular frame of the metre. In respect to a stanza for a grand subject designed to be treated comprehensively, there are great objections. If the stanza be short, it will scarcely allow of fervour and impetuosity, unless so short that the sense is run perpetually from one stanza to another, as in Horace's alcaics; and if it be long, it will be as apt to generate diffuseness as to check it. Of this we have innumerable instances in Spenser and the Italian poets. The sense required cannot be included in one given stanza, so that another whole stanza is added not unfrequently for the sake of matter which would naturally include itself in a very few lines.

If Gray's plan be adopted, there is not time to become acquainted with the arrangement, and to recognise with pleasure the recurrence of the movement.

Be so good as to let me know where you found most difficulty in following me. The passage which I most suspect of being misunderstood is,

And thus is missed the sole true glory ;

and the passage where I doubt most about the reasonableness of expecting that the reader should follow me, in the luxuriance of the imagery and the language, is the one that describes — under so many metaphors — the spreading of the news of the Waterloo victory over the globe. Tell me if this displeased you.

Do you know who reviewed *The White Doe* in the *Quarterly*? After having asserted that Mr. W. uses his words without any regard to their sense, the writer says that on no other principle can he explain that Emily is *always* called “the consecrated Emily.” Now, the name Emily occurs just fifteen times in the poem; and out of these fifteen the epithet is attached to it *once*, and that for the express purpose of recalling the scene in which she had been consecrated by her brother’s solemn adjuration that she would fulfil her destiny, and become

A soul, by force of sorrows high,
Uplifted to the purest sky
Of undisturbed humanity!

The point upon which the whole moral interest of the piece hinges, when that speech is closed, occurs in this line,

He kissed the consecrated maid;

and to bring this back to the reader I repeated the epithet.

The service I have lately rendered to Burns’s genius will one day be performed to mine. The quotations, also, are printed with the most culpable neglect of correctness: there are lines turned into nonsense. Too much of this. Farewell! Believe me,

Affectionately yours,

W. WORDSWORTH.

William Wordsworth to Robert Southey

[No date.]

Dear Southey,

. . . My opinion in respect to epic poetry is much the same as that of the critic whom Lucien Bonaparte has quoted in his preface. Epic poetry, of the highest class, requires in the first place an action eminently influential, an action with a grand or sublime train of consequences ; it next requires the intervention and guidance of beings superior to man, what the critics, I believe, call machinery ; and lastly, I think with Dennis that no subject but a religious one can answer the demand of the soul in the highest class of this species of poetry. Now Tasso's is a religious subject, and in my opinion a most happy one ; but I am confidently of opinion that the movement of Tasso's poem rarely corresponds with the essential character of the subject ; nor do I think it possible that, written in stanzas, it should. The celestial movement cannot, I think, be kept up, if the sense is to be broken in that despotic manner at the close of every eight lines. Spenser's stanza is infinitely finer than the *ottava rima*, but even Spenser's will not allow the epic movement as exhibited by Homer, Virgil, and Milton. How noble is the first paragraph of the *Æneid* in point of sound, compared with the first stanza of the *Jerusalem Delivered* ! The one winds with the majesty of the Conscript Fathers entering the Senate House in solemn procession ; and the other has the pace of a set of recruits shuffling on the drill-ground, and receiving from the adjutant or drill-serjeant the command to halt at every ten or twenty steps. Farewell.

Affectionately yours,

W. WORDSWORTH.

34

Dorothy Wordsworth to Sara Coleridge

Easter Tuesday, [1818.]

My dearest Sara,

. . . We left Rydal precisely at a quarter past twelve, halted three quarters of an hour at Stavely, and reached Kendal at a quarter before five o'clock. I give you these particulars for the sake of our dear friend Mrs. Luff, who will be glad to hear that at forty-six I can walk sixteen miles in four hours and three quarters, with short rests between, on a blustering cold day, without having felt any fatigue, except for the first half hour after my entrance into the house at my journey's end, when my body remembered the force of the blast, and I was exhausted. . . .

Your affectionate

D. WORDSWORTH.

35

William Wordsworth to Correspondent Unknown

RYDAL MOUNT, April 21, 1819.

Sir,

The letter with which you have honoured me, bearing date the 31st of March, I did not receive until yesterday, and therefore could not earlier express my regret that, notwithstanding a cordial approbation of the feeling which has prompted the undertaking, and a genuine sympathy in admiration with the gentlemen who have subscribed

towards a monument for Burns, I cannot unite my humble efforts with theirs in promoting this object.

Sincerely can I affirm that my respect for the motives which have swayed these gentlemen has urged me to trouble you with a brief statement of the reasons of my dissent.

In the first place, eminent poets appear to me to be a class of men who, less than any others, stand in need of such marks of distinction; and hence I infer that this mode of acknowledging their merits is one for which they would not, in general, be themselves solicitous. Burns did, indeed, erect a monument to Ferguson¹; but I apprehend that his gratitude took this course because he felt that Ferguson had been prematurely cut off, and that his fame bore no proportion to his deserts. In neither of these particulars can the fate of Burns justly be said to resemble that of his predecessor. His years indeed were few, but numerous enough to allow him to spread his name far and wide, and to take permanent root in the affections of his countrymen. In short he has raised for himself a monument so conspicuous, and of such imperishable materials, as to render a local fabric of stone superfluous, and therefore comparatively insignificant.

But why, if this be granted, should not his fond admirers be permitted to indulge their feelings, and at the same time to embellish the metropolis of Scotland? If this may be justly objected to — and in my opinion it may — it is because the showy tributes to genius are apt

¹ In 1787 the managers of the kirkyard of the Canongate, Edinburgh, allowed Burns to erect a headstone at the grave of Robert Ferguson, who died in 1774, and was buried (as Burns put it in his letter to them) "in that churchyard amongst the ignoble dead, unnoticed and unknown." — Ed.

to draw off attention from those efforts by which the interests of literature might be substantially promoted, and to exhaust public spirit in comparatively unprofitable exertions, when the wrongs of literary men are crying out for redress on all sides. It appears to me that towards no class of his Majesty's subjects are the laws so unjust and oppressive. The attention of Parliament has lately been diverted, by petition, to the exaction of copies of newly published works for certain libraries; but this is a trifling evil compared with the restrictions imposed upon the duration of copyright, which — in respect to works profound in Philosophy, or elevated, abstract, and refined in Imagination — is tantamount to an exclusion of the author from all pecuniary recompense. Even where works of imagination are adapted to immediate demand, as in the case of those of Burns, it may be justly asked what reason can be assigned that an author who dies young should have the prospect before him of his children being left to languish in poverty and dependence, while booksellers are revelling in luxury upon gains derived from works which are the delight of many nations.

This subject might be carried much further; and we might ask, if the course of things insured immediate wealth and accompanying rank and honours, — honours and wealth often entailed on their families to men distinguished in the other learned professions, — why the laws should interfere to take away those pecuniary emoluments which are the natural inheritance of the posterity of authors whose pursuits, if directed by genius and sustained by industry, yield in importance to none in which the members of a community can be engaged?

But to recur to the proposal in your letter. I would readily assist, according to my means, in erecting a

monument to the poet Chatterton, who, with transcendent genius, was cut off while he was yet a boy in years. This, could he have anticipated the tribute, might have soothed his troubled spirit, as an expression of general belief in the existence of those powers which he was too impatient and too proud to develop. At all events, it might prove an awful and a profitable warning, and I should also be glad to see a monument erected on the banks of Lochleven to the memory of the innocent and tender-hearted Michael Bruce,¹ who, after a short life spent in poverty and obscurity, was called away too early to leave behind him more than a few trustworthy promises of pure affection and unvitiated imagination.

Let the gallant defenders of our country be liberally rewarded with monuments: their noble actions cannot speak for themselves as the writings of men of genius are able to do. Gratitude in respect to them stands in need of admonition; and the very multitude of heroic competitors, which increase the demand for this sentiment towards our naval and military defenders considered as a body, is injurious to the claims of individuals. Let our great statesmen and eminent lawyers, our learned and eloquent divines, and they who have successfully devoted themselves to the abstruser sciences, be rewarded in like manner; but towards departed genius, exerted in the fine arts and more especially in poetry, I humbly think (in the present state of things) the sense of our obligation to it may more satisfactorily be expressed by means pointing directly to the general benefit of Literature.

¹ Michael Bruce (1746-1767), author of *Lochleven, Elegy*, etc. In early years a cowherd, he attended Edinburgh University and became a schoolmaster, but contracting consumption, he died at the age of twenty-three. A monument was erected to him in Portmoak churchyard, Kinross-shire. — Ed.

Trusting that these opinions of an individual will be candidly interpreted, I have the honour to be,

Your obedient servant,

WM. WORDSWORTH.

36

William Wordsworth to Edward Moxon

14th July.

We have had Mr. Bryant, the American poet, and a friend here.

37

William Wordsworth to Edward Moxon

[No date.]

. . . Yesterday we had two sons of the poet Burns as visitors.

38

William Wordsworth to Lord Lonsdale

PARIS, Oct. 7 [1820], 45 RUE CHARLOT,
BOULEVARDS DU TEMPLE.

My Lord,

I had the honour of writing to your Lordship from Lucerne, 19th of August, giving an account of our movements. We have visited, since, those parts of Switzerland usually deemed most worthy of notice, and the Italian lakes, having stopped four days at Milan, and as many at

Geneva. With the exception of a couple of days on the lake of Geneva, the weather has been most favourable, though frequently during the last fortnight extremely cold. We have had no detention from illness, nor any bad accident, for which we feel more grateful, on account of some of our fellow-travellers, who accidentally joined us for a few days. Of these, one, an American gentleman, was drowned in the lake of Zurich by the upsetting of a boat in a storm, two or three days after he parted with us; and two others, near the summit of Mount Jura, and in the middle of a tempestuous night, were precipitated, they scarcely knew how far, along with one of those frightful and ponderous vehicles, a continental diligence. We have been in Paris since Sunday last, and think of staying about a fortnight longer, as scarcely less will suffice for even a hasty view of the town and neighbourhood. We took Fontainebleau in our way, and intend giving a day to Versailles. The day we entered Paris we passed a well-dressed young man and woman dragging a harrow through a field, like cattle; nevertheless, working in the fields on the Sabbath Day does not appear to be general in France. On the same day a wretched-looking person begged of us as the carriage was climbing a hill. Nothing could exceed his transport in receiving a pair of old pantaloons which were handed out of the carriage. This poor mendicant, the postilion told us, was an *ancien curé*. The churches seem generally falling into decay in the country. We passed one which had been recently repaired. I have noticed, however, several young persons, men as well as women, earnestly employed in their devotions in different churches, both in Paris and elsewhere. Nothing which I have seen in this city has interested me at all like the *Jardin des Plantes*, with the living animals, and the

Museum of Natural History which it includes. Scarcely could I refrain from tears of admiration at the sight of this apparently boundless exhibition of the wonders of the creation. The statues and pictures of the Louvre affect me feebly in comparison. The exterior of Paris is much changed since I last visited it in 1792. I miss many ancient buildings, particularly the Temple, where the poor king and his family were so long confined. That memorable spot, where the Jacobin Club was held, has also disappeared. Nor are the additional buildings always improvements; the *Pont des Arts*, in particular, injures the view from the *Pont Neuf* greatly; but in these things public convenience is the main point.

I say nothing of public affairs, for I have little opportunity of knowing anything about them. In respect to the business of our Queen, we deem ourselves truly fortunate in having been out of the country at a time when an inquiry, at which all Europe seems scandalised, was going on.

I have purposely deferred congratulating your Lordship on the marriage of Lady Mary with Lord Frederick Bentinck, which I hear has been celebrated. My wishes for her happiness are most earnest.

With respectful compliments and congratulations to Lady Lonsdale, in which Mrs. Wordsworth begs leave to join, I have the honour to be, my Lord,

Your Lordship's

Obliged and faithful friend and servant,

WM. WORDSWORTH.

William Wordsworth to Robert Southey

———, 1827.

My dear Sir,

Edith thanked you, in my name, for your valuable present of *The Peninsular War*.¹ I have read it with great delight: it is beautifully written, and a most interesting story. I did not notice a single sentiment or opinion that I could have wished away but one — where you support the notion that if the Duke of Wellington had not lived and commanded, Bonaparte must have continued the master of Europe. I do not object to this from any dislike I have to the Duke, but from a conviction — I trust, a philosophic one — that Providence would not allow the upsetting of so diabolical a system as Bonaparte's to depend upon the existence of any individual. Justly was it observed by Lord Wellesley, that Bonaparte was of an order of minds that created for themselves great reverses. He might have gone further, and said that it is of the nature of tyranny to work to its own destruction.

The sentence of yours which occasioned these loose remarks is, as I said, the only one I objected to, while I met with a thousand things to admire. Your sympathy with the great cause is everywhere energetically and feelingly expressed. What fine fellows were Alvarez and Albuquerque; and how deeply interesting the siege of Gerona!

¹ The first volume appeared in 1823, the second in 1827, and the third in 1832. Southey wrote in the copy he sent to Rydal, "William Wordsworth, from the author, Dec. 14, 1822. "Praecipuum munus Annalium reor, ne virtutes sileantur, utque pravis dictis factisque ex posteritate et infamia metus sit? Tacitus."

I have not yet mentioned dear Sir George Beaumont. His illness was not long ; and he was prepared by habitually thinking on his latter end.¹ But it is impossible not to grieve for ourselves, for his loss cannot be supplied. Let dear Edith stay as long as you can ; and when she must go, pray come for her, and stay a few days with us. Farewell.

Ever most affectionately yours,

W. W.

40

*William Wordsworth to Christopher Wordsworth*²

RYDAL MOUNT, Nov. 27, 1828.

My dear C——,

It gives me much pleasure to learn that your residence in France has answered so well. As I had recommended the step, I felt more especially anxious to be informed of the result. I have only to regret that you did not tell me whether the interests of a foreign country and a brilliant metropolis had encroached more upon the time due to academical studies than was proper.

As to the revolution which Mr. D—— calculates upon, I agree with him that a great change must take place, but not altogether, or even mainly, from the causes which he looks to, if I be right in conjecturing that he expects that the religionists who have at present such influence over the king's mind will be predominant. The extremes to which they wish to carry things are not sufficiently in the spirit of the age to suit their purpose. The French monarchy must undergo a great change, or it will fall altogether. A constitution of government so disproportioned cannot

¹ He died on Feb. 7, 1827. — Ed.

² His nephew. — Ed.

endure. A monarchy without a powerful aristocracy or nobility graduating into a gentry, and so downwards, cannot long subsist. This is wanting in France, and must continue to be wanting till the restrictions imposed on the disposal of property by will, through the Code Napoleon, are done away with; and it may be observed, by-the-bye that there is a bareness, some would call it a simplicity, in that code which unfits it for a complex state of society like that of France, so that evasions and stretchings of its provisions are already found necessary, to a degree which will ere long convince the French people of the necessity of disencumbering themselves of it. But to return.

My fear is, that for the cause assigned, the French monarchy may fall before an aristocracy can be raised to give it necessary support. The great monarchies of Russia, Prussia, and Austria, having not yet been subject to popular revolutions, are still able to maintain themselves, through the old feudal *forces* and qualities, with something, not much, of the feudal *virtues*. This cannot be in France; popular inclinations are much too strong — thanks, I will say so far, to the Revolution. How is a government fit for her condition to be supported but by religion, and a spirit of honour or refined conscience? Now religion, in a widely extended country plentifully peopled, cannot be preserved from abuse of priestly influence, and from superstition and fanaticism, nor honour be an operating principle upon a large scale, except through *property* — that is, such accumulations of it, graduated, as I have mentioned above, through the community. Thus and thus only can be had exemption from temptation to low habits of mind, leisure for solid education, and dislike to innovation, from a sense in the several classes how much they have to lose; for circumstances often make men wiser, or at least

more discreet, when their individual levity or presumption would dispose them to be much otherwise. To what extent that constitution of character which is produced by property makes up for the decay of chivalrous loyalty and strengthens governments, may be seen by comparing the officers of the English army with those of Prussia, etc. How far superior are ours as gentlemen! so much so that British officers can scarcely associate with those of the Continent, not from pride, but instinctive aversion to their low propensities. But I cannot proceed, and ought, my dear C——, to crave your indulgence for so long a prose.

When you see Frere, pray give him my kind regards, and say that he shall hear from me the first frank I can procure. Farewell, with kindest love from all,

Yours very affectionately,
W. W.

41

William Wordsworth to George Huntly Gordon

RYDAL MOUNT, Dec. 15, 1828.

How strange that any one should be puzzled with the name *Triad* after reading the poem! I have turned to Dr. Johnson, and there find "Triad, three united," and not a word more, as nothing more was needed. I should have been rather mortified if *you* had not liked the piece, as I think it contains some of the happiest verses I ever wrote. It had been promised several years to two of the party before a fancy fit for the performance struck me; it was then thrown off rapidly, and afterwards revised with care. During the last week I wrote some stanzas on the *Power of Sound*, which ought to find a place in my larger work if aught should ever come of that.

In the book on the Lakes, which I have not at hand, is a passage rather too vaguely expressed, where I content myself with saying, that after a certain point of elevation the effect of mountains depends much more upon their form than upon their absolute height. This point, which ought to have been defined, is the one to which fleecy clouds (not thin watery vapours) are accustomed to descend. I am glad you are so much interested with this little tract; it could not have been written without long experience. I remain, most faithfully,

Your much obliged,

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH.

42

William Wordsworth to Barron Field

RYDAL MOUNT, 24th Oct., 1828.

My dear Sir,

I will not spend time in thanking you for your kindness, but will go at once to the point and to the strongest case, *The Beggars*.¹ I will state the faults, real or supposed, which put me on the task of altering it.

What other dress she had I could not know, you must allow is a villainous line, one of the very worst in my whole writings. I hope so at least.

In all my walks, through field or town,
I thought obtrusively personal.

Her face was of Egyptian brown.

¹ This letter was in answer to Mr. Field's remonstrance with Wordsworth for the alterations on the text of some of his poems, which he made in the edition of 1827, in deference, Mr. Field thought, to the criticisms of the *Edinburgh Review*. — Ed.

The style, or rather composition, of this whole stanza is what I call brick laying, formal accumulation of particulars.

Pouring out savour like a sea,

I did not like ; and "sea" clashes with "was beautiful to see" below. "The English land" is the same rhyme as "gayest of the land," in the stanza below. Such were the reasons for altering. Now for the success.

Nor claimed she service from the hood,

is, I own, an expression too pompous for the occasion ; and if you could substitute a line for the villainous "What other dress, etc.," I would willingly part with it. But there is still a difficulty.

She had a tall man's height, or more,

would anticipate

She towered, fit person for a queen.

The boys could well understand "looking reproof." There is frowning, shaking the head, etc. "Telling a lie" might be restored without much objection on my part,¹ for "Heaven hears that rash reply" is somewhat too refined ; but as

It was your mother, as I say,

is retained, the fact is implied of my knowledge of their having told an untruth. It is not to be denied that I have aimed at giving more elegance and dignity to this poem, partly on its own account, and partly that it might harmonise better with the one appended to it. I thought I had succeeded in my attempt better than it seems I have

¹ It was restored in the edition of 1836. — Ed.

done. You will observe that in my meditated alterations of the first stanza, which I should be very thankful if you could do for me, the word "head" cannot be used, on account of "head those ancient Amazonian piles," in the stanza below.¹

The Blind Highland Boy

The "shell" was substituted for the "washing-tub," on the suggestion of Coleridge; and, greatly as I respect your opinion and Lamb's, I cannot now bring myself to undo my work; though if I had been aware beforehand that such judges would have objected, I should not have troubled myself with making the alteration. I met the other day with a pretty picture of hazardous navigation like this. I think it is on the coast of Madras where people are described as trusting themselves to the rough waves on small rafts, in such a way that the flat raft being hidden from view by the billows, the navigator appears to be sitting on the bare waters.

Rural Architecture

From the meadows of Armath, etc.

My sister objected so strongly to this alteration at the time, that — her judgment being confirmed by yours — the old reading may be restored.

Pedestrian Tour among the Alps

No more, along thy vales and viny groves,
Whole hamlets disappearing as he moves,
With cheeks o'erspread by smiles of baleful glow,
On his pale horse shall fell consumption go.

¹ In the edition of 1836 "lead" was substituted for "head." — Ed.

I had utterly forgotten this passage : at all events, as a bold juvenile thing, it might be restored. I suppose I must have written it from its being applied here in my mind, not to an individual but to a people.¹

Ruth

And there exulting in her wrongs,
Among the music of her songs,
She fearfully caroused.

This was altered, Lamb having observed that it was not English. I liked it better myself, but certainly to carouse cups — that is to empty them — is the genuine English.

The Sailor's Mother

And, thus continuing, she said,
"I had a son, who many a day
Sailed on the seas.

These words shall be restored. I suppose I had objected to the first line, which — it must be allowed — is rather flat.²

He to a fellow-lodger's care
Had left it to be watched and fed
Till he came back again.

Then this last line,

And pipe its song in safety,

I own strikes me as better, because "from the bodings of his mind" he feared he should not come back again.

¹ See *Descriptive Sketches* (edition 1793), ll. 788-791. — Ed.

² The lines, in the 1820 edition, afterwards rejected, are, —

I had a son — the waves might roar,
He feared them not, a sailor gay!
But he will cross the waves no more. — Ed.

He might dramatically have said to his fellow-lodger, "Take care of this bird till I come back again," not liking to own to another, or to himself even in words, that he feared he should not return; but, as he is not introduced here speaking, it is I think better, and brings in a pretty image of the bird singing, when its master might be in peril, or no more.

The Emigrant Mother

Smiles hast thou, bright ones of thy own;
I cannot keep thee in my arms,
For they confound me; as it is,
I have forgot those smiles of his.

Coleridge objected to the last two lines, for which

By those bewildering glances crost,
In which the light of his is lost,

may be substituted. The alteration ought, in my judgment, to be retained.¹

The Idiot Boy

"Across the saddle," much better. So "up towards," instead of "up upon" in *Michael*.

The Green Linnet

A brother of the leaves he seems

may be thus retained:

My sight he dazzles — nay deceives:
He seems a brother of the leaves.

¹ The final reading of 1836 was, —

For they confound me; — where — where is
That last, that sweetest smile of his. — Ed.

The stanza, as you have been accustomed to quote it, is very faulty. "Forth he teems" is a provincialism. Dr. Johnson says, "A low word, when used in this sense." But my main motive for altering this stanza was the wholly unjustifiable use of the word *train* as applied to leaves *attached* to a tree.¹ A train of *withered* leaves, driven by the wind along the ground — as I have often seen them, sparkling in April sunshine — might be said.

To the Small Celandine

"Old Magellan" shall be restored.

To the Daisy

Thou wander'st the wide world about. Etc. etc.

I was loath to part with this stanza. It may either be restored, or printed at the end of a volume, among "notes and variations," when you edit the fifteenth edition!

To a Skylark

After having succeeded in the second *Skylark*, and in the conclusion of the poem entitled *A Morning Exercise*, in my notice of this bird, I became indifferent to this poem, which Coleridge used severely to condemn, and to treat contemptuously. I like, however, the beginning of it so well that, for the sake of that, I tacked to it the respectably tame conclusion. I have no objection, as you have been pleased with it, to restore the whole piece. Could you improve it a little?

¹ In text of 1807 the lines occur

While he was dancing with the train
Of leaves among the bushes. — Ed.

To the Cuckoo

At once far off and near.

Restore this. The alteration was made in consequence of my noticing one day that the voice of a cuckoo, which I had heard from a tree at a great distance, did not seem any louder when I approached the tree.

Gipsies

The concluding apology should be cancelled. "Goings-on" is precisely the word wanted; but it makes a weak and apparently prosaic line, so near the end of a poem. I fear it cannot be altered, as the rhyme must be retained, on account of the concluding verse.¹

In the second *Cuckoo*,² I was displeased with the existing alterations; and in my copy have written in pencil thus:

Such rebounds our inward ear
Often catches from afar:
Listen, ponder, etc.,

restoring "listen, ponder." The word "rebounds" I wish much to introduce here; for the imaginative warning

¹ Mr. Barron Field wrote, "The alteration was made in consequence of Coleridge's critique, in his *Biographia Literaria* (Vol. II. p. 153), in which he charges Wordsworth with not reflecting that the poor tawny wanderers might probably have been tramping for weeks together, and consequently might have been right glad to rest themselves for one whole day. I believe that I replied to this objection that travelling industry was not the habit of gipsies, who are naturally loitering basking idlers, 'tasteless,' in the strongest sense of the word, and that the poet's moral was truly drawn, though perhaps the contrasted images and thoughts might be too great for the subject." — Ed.

² The poem beginning,

Yes, it was the mountain echo. — Ed.

turns upon the echo, which ought to be revived as near the conclusion as possible. This rule of art holds equally good as to the theme of a piece of music, as in a poem.

Prima dicte mihi, summa dicende Camæna.

(Horace, *Epistolæ*, I, i. 1.)

Peele Castle in a Storm

The light that never was on sea or land

shall be restored. I need not trouble you with the reasons that put me upon the alteration.

The passages in *Peter Bell* were altered out of deference to the opinion of others. You say "little" is a word of endearment. I meant "little mulish," as contemptuous. "Spiteful," I fear, would scarcely be understood without your anecdote.

Is it a party in a parlour?
Crammed just as they on earth were crammed,
Some sipping punch, some sipping tea,
But as you by their faces see,
All silent, and all damned.

This stanza — though one of the most imaginative in the whole piece — I omitted, not to offend the pious.

The Excursion (edition of 1827)

And make the vessel of the big round year.

I know there is such a line as this somewhere; but, for the life of me, I cannot tell where.

He yielded, though reluctant, for his mind
Instinctively disposed him to retire
To his own covert: as a billow heaved
Upon the beach rolls back into the sea.

I cannot accede to your objections to the billow. The point simply is, he was cast out of his element and falls back into it, as naturally and necessarily as a billow into the sea. There is imagination in fastening solely upon that characteristic point of resemblance, stopping there, thinking of nothing else.

And there,
Merrily seated in a ring partook
The beverage drawn from China's fragrant herb.

"Drank tea" is too familiar. My line is (I own) somewhat too profound, as you say.

It now stands

A choice repast—served by our young companions,
With rival earnestness and kindred glee.

I am much pleased that you think the alterations of *The Excursion* improvements. My sister thinks them so invariably. . . .

I remain, very faithfully yours,

W. WORDSWORTH.

43

William Wordsworth to Alexander Dyce

RYDAL MOUNT, NEAR KENDAL,

October 29, 1828.

Sir,

I have to thank you for your elegant edition of Collins,¹ an author who from the melancholy circumstances of his life, particularly the latter part of it, has a peculiar claim

¹ William Collins (1721-1759). *Odes* (1746), *Elegy on Thomson* and *Dirge in Cymbeline* (1747), *Ode on the Popular Superstition of the Highlands* (1750).—Ed.

upon such attention as you have bestowed upon him and his works.

I do not doubt that the lines in Bell's edition of the Highland Ode are spurious; but in this opinion I am far less disposed to insist than to maintain that the principle is decidedly bad of admitting anything as the genuine work of a deceased author but upon substantial external evidence. There may be exceptions to this rule, but they are very rare, and in our Literature are almost confined to certain works of Shakespeare (*Pericles* for example) which ought to be admitted from internal evidence alone.

In the case of this ode of Collins there is not a jot of *external* evidence entitled to consideration. What are the facts? In 1749, according to Dr. Anderson — or, according to Boswell, 1781 — Johnson's *Lives of the Poets* was published; and it was made known to the literary world that Collins had composed an *Ode on the Popular Superstitions of the Highlands* of Scotland, which the Wartons (who had seen it) thought the best of his works. In 1784 Dr. Carlyle¹ read from a MS. in Collins's own handwriting this ode, of which a stanza and a half were wanting, and in 1788 the Ode was first printed from Dr. Carlyle's copy, with Mr. Mackenzie's supplemental lines, and was extensively circulated through the English newspapers, in which I remember to have read it with great pleasure upon its first appearance. . . .

It is not to be doubted that the copy which Collins himself read to the Wartons in 1754 of this ode, which was composed in 1749, had undergone a studious revisal. That copy in all probability perished in the wreck of Collins's papers. Assuredly the stanzas supplied in Bell's

¹ Rev. Alexander Carlyle of Inveresk, Scotland (1722-1805). — Ed.

edition were not printed by his editor. Collins could at no period of his life have suffered so bad a line to stand as,

They mourned in air, *fell fell rebellion slain*,

or such a one as

Pale red Culloden where those hopes were drowned.

Or is it likely that Collins, how far soever participating the popular enthusiasm in favour of the Duke of Cumberland, would have pronounced him a person more glorious than one who had "gained heroic fame" because he (the Duke)

Broke slavery's chain to reign a *private* man,

that is, to be content with a station from which he could not have attempted to raise himself without being a rebel or a traitor? — I never saw the *Edinburgh Transactions*, in which Dr. C's copy was printed. If I had it before me, I should enter for your satisfaction into the minutiae of the internal evidence. . . .

By-the-bye, I am almost sure that that very agreeable line,

Nor ever vernal tree was heard to murmur,

is from Warton's account of St. Hilda. . . .

Excuse this tedious scrawl, which I fear you will find illegible. I have been impatient in writing it, as I always am.

I remain,

Sincerely, your obliged servant,

WM. WORDSWORTH.

William Wordsworth to William Rowan Hamilton

RYDAL MOUNT, KENDAL, Feb. 12, 1829.

. . . Now for a few words upon your enclosures. Your own verses are dated 1826. I note this early date with pleasure, because I think if they had been composed lately, the only objections I make to them would probably not have existed, at least in an equal degree. It is an objection that relates to style alone, and to versification; for example, the last line, "And he was *the* enthusiast no more," which is, in meaning, the weightiest of all, is not sinewy enough in sound — the syllable *the*, as the metre requires, should be long, but it is short and imparts a languor to the sense. The three lines, "As if he were addressing," etc., are too prosaic in movement. . . .

The specimens of your young friend's¹ genius are very promising. . . . I should say to him, however, as I said to you, that *style* is, in poetry, of incalculable importance; he seems, however, aware of it, for his diction is obviously studied. Thus the great difficulty is to determine what constitutes a good style. In deciding this, we are all subject to delusions; not improbably I am so, when it appears to me that the metaphor in the first speech of his dramatic scene is too much drawn out; it does not pass off as rapidly as metaphors ought to, I think, in dramatic writing. I am well aware that our early dramatists abound with these continuations of imagery, but to me they appear laboured and unnatural — at least, unsuited to that species of composition of which action and motion are the essentials. "While with the ashes of a light that was" and the two following lines are in the best style of dramatic

¹ Francis B. Edgeworth. — Ed.

writing; to every opinion thus given, always add, I pray you, *in my judgment*, though I may not, to save trouble or to avoid a charge of false modesty, express it. "This over-perfume of a heavy pleasure," etc., is admirable, and indeed it would be tedious to praise all that pleases me.

Shelley's *Witch of Atlas* I never saw; therefore the stanza referring to Narcissus and her was read by me to some disadvantage. One observation I am about to make will at least prove I am no flatterer, and will, therefore, give a qualified value to my praise:

There was nought there
But those three ancient hills *alone*.

Here the word "alone," being used instead of "only," makes an absurdity like that noticed in the *Spectator* — "Enter a king and three fiddlers, *solus*."

The sonnet I like very much, with no drawback but what is — in a great measure — personal to myself. I am so accustomed, in my own practice, to pass one set of rhymes at least through the first eight lines, that the want of that vein of sound takes from the music something of its consistency to my mind and ear. Farewell. I shall at all times be glad to hear from you, and still more to see you.

Most sincerely yours,

WM. WORDSWORTH.

45

William Wordsworth to Robert Southey

[1828, or 1829.]

My dear S.,

I am ashamed not to have given your message about the *Icon*¹ to my brother.² I have no excuse, but that at that time both my body and my memory were run off their legs. I am very glad you thought the answer³ appeared to you triumphant, for it had struck me as, in the main points — knowledge of the subject, spirit in the writing, and accuracy in the logic — one of the best controversial tracts I ever read.

I am glad you have been so busy; I wish I could say so much of myself. I have written this last month, however, about six hundred verses, with tolerable success.

Many thanks for the *Review*: your article is excellent. I only wish that you had said more of the deserts of government in respect to Ireland; since I do sincerely believe that no government in Europe has shown better dispositions to its subjects than the English have done to the Irish, and that no country has improved so much during the same period. You have adverted to this part of the subject, but not spoken so forcibly as I could have wished. There is another point that might be insisted upon more expressly than you have done — the danger, not to say the absurdity, of Roman Catholic legislation for the property of a Protestant church so inadequately represented in

¹ His volume on the authorship of *Icon Basiliké* (1824). — Ed.

² Christopher Wordsworth. — Ed.

³ *King Charles the First, the author of "Icon Basiliké"* (1828). — Ed.

Parliament as ours is. The Convocation is gone; clergymen are excluded from the House of Commons; and the Bishops are at the beck of Ministers. I boldly ask what real property of the country is so inadequately represented: it is a mere mockery.

Most affectionately yours,

W. W.

46

William Wordsworth to George Huntly Gordon

RYDAL MOUNT, Thursday Night,
Feb. 26, 1829.

You ask for my opinion on the Roman Catholic question.

I dare scarcely trust my pen to the notice of the question which the Duke of Wellington tells us is about to be settled. One thing no rational person will deny, that the experiment is hazardous. Equally obvious is it that the timidity, supineness, and other unworthy qualities of the government for many years past have produced the danger, the extent of which they now affirm imposes a necessity of granting all that the Romanists demand. Now it is rather too much that the country should be called upon to take the measure of this danger from the very men who may almost be said to have created it. Danger is a relative thing, and the first requisite for judging of what we have to dread from the physical force of the Roman Catholics is to be in sympathy with the Protestants. Had our Ministers been so, could they have suffered themselves to be bearded by the Catholic Association for so many years?

C——, if I may take leave to say it, loses sight of things in names, when he says that they should not be admitted as Roman Catholics, but simply as British subjects. The question before us is, Can Protestantism and Popery be coördinate powers in the constitution of a free country, and at the same time Christian belief be in that country a vital principle of action?

I fear not. Heaven grant I may be deceived!¹

W. W.

47

William Wordsworth to George Huntly Gordon

RYDAL MOUNT, May 14, 1829.

Mr. Southey means to present me (as usual) his *Colloquies*, etc. There is, perhaps, not a page of them that he did not read me in MS.; and several of the Dialogues are upon subjects which we have often discussed. I am greatly interested with much of the book, but upon its effect as a whole I can yet form no opinion, as it was read to me as it happened to be written. I need scarcely say that Mr. Southey ranks very highly, in my opinion, as a prose writer. His style is eminently clear, lively, and unencumbered, and his information unbounded; and there is a moral ardour about his compositions which nobly distinguishes them from the trading and factious authorship of the present day. He may not improbably be our companion in Wales next year. At the end of this month he goes, with his family, to the Isle of Man for sea-air;

¹ With this letter compare the one on *The Catholic Relief Bill*, which Wordsworth wrote to an English prelate (whose name his nephew, and biographer, does not give us), in the *Prose Works*, Eversley edition, Vol. II, pp. 335-346. — Ed.

and said, if I would accompany him, and put off the Welsh tour for another year, he would join our party. Notwithstanding the inducement, I could not bring myself to consent; but as things now are, I shall remind him of the hope he held out.

Believe me, very faithfully yours,

WM. WORDSWORTH.

There is no probability of my being in town this season. I have a horror of smoking; and nothing but a necessity for health's sake could reconcile me to it in William. . . .

48

William Wordsworth to Dorothy Wordsworth

Sept. 24, 1829.

. . . The Romanists, that is the lower orders, are entirely under the command of their priests, ready to stir in any commotion to which their spiritual leaders may be inclined to incite them; so that the country may be pronounced to be in an unwholesome if not alarming state. . . . Through the political agitators and the priests, and the bigotry and ignorance of the lower orders, who are so prodigiously numerous, I dread the worst for the Established Church of Ireland. After all, tranquillity might be restored, and the country preserved, if the English Parliament and Government could see their interests and do their duty. The fact is, they know not how formidable Popery is; how deeply noted it is; nor that it is impossible that Ireland can prosper, or be at peace, unless the Protestant Religion be properly valued by the Government. . . .

William Wordsworth to George Huntly Gordon

RYDAL MOUNT, Dec. 1, 1829.

My dear Sir,

You must not go to Ireland without applying to me, as the guide-books for the most part are sorry things, and mislead by their exaggerations. If I were a younger man, and could prevail upon an able artist to accompany me, there are few things I should like better than giving a month or six weeks to explore the county of Kerry only. A judicious topographical work on that district would be really useful, both for the lovers of Nature and the observers of manners. As to the Giant's Causeway and the coast of Antrim, you cannot go wrong; there the interests obtrude themselves on every one's notice.

The subject of the Poor Laws was never out of my sight whilst I was in Ireland; it seems to me next to impossible to introduce a general system of such laws, principally for two reasons: the vast numbers that would have equal claims for relief, and the non-existence of a class capable of looking with effect to their administration. Much is done at present in many places (Derry, for example) by voluntary contributions; but the narrow-minded escape from the burthen, which falls unreasonably upon the charitable; so that assessments in the best-disposed places are to be wished for, could they be effected without producing a greater evil.

The great difficulty that is complained of in the well-managed places is the floating poor, who cannot be excluded, I am told, by any existing law from quartering themselves where they like. Open begging is not practiced in many places, but there is no law by which the

poor can be prevented from returning to a place which they may have quitted voluntarily, or from which they have been expelled (as I was told). Were it not for this obstacle compulsory local regulations might, I think, be applied in many districts with good effect.

It would be unfair to myself to quit this momentous subject without adding that I am a zealous friend to the great principle of the Poor Laws, as tending, if judiciously applied, much more to elevate than to depress the character of the labouring classes. I have never seen this truth developed as it ought to be in Parliament.

The day I dined with Lord F. L. Gower at his official residence in the Phoenix Park I met there with an intelligent gentleman, Mr. Page, who was travelling in Ireland expressly to collect information upon this subject, which, no doubt, he means to publish. If you should hear of this pamphlet when it comes out, procure it, for I am persuaded it will prove well worth reading. Farewell.

Faithfully yours,

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH.

50

*William Wordsworth to James Stanger*¹

My dear Sir,

The obstacle arising out of conflicting opinions in regard to the patronage, one must be prepared for in every project of this kind. Mutual giving-way is indispensable, and I hope it will not ultimately be wanting in this case.

¹ Mr. Stanger married a daughter of Wordsworth's friend, William Calvert. — Ed.

The point immediately to be attended to is the raising a sufficient sum to insure from the Church Building Societies a portion of the surplus fund which they have at command, and which I know, on account of claims from many places, they are anxious to apply as speedily as possible. If time be lost, that sum will be lost to Cockermouth.

In the question of the patronage as between the bishop and the people, I entirely concur with you in preference of the former. Such is now the force of public opinion, that bishops are not likely to present upon merely selfish considerations ; and if the judgment of one be not good, that of his successor may make amends, and probably will. But elections of this sort, when vested in the inhabitants, have, as far as my experience goes, given rise to so many cabals and manœuvres, and caused such enmities and heart-burnings, that Christian charity has been driven out of sight by them : and how often, and how soon, have the successful party been seen to repent of their own choice !

The course of public affairs being what it is in respect to the Church, I cannot reconcile myself to delay from a hope of succeeding at another time. If we can get a new church erected at Cockermouth, great will be the benefit, with the blessing of God, to that place ; and our success cannot, I trust, but excite some neighbouring places to follow the example.

The little that I can do in my own sphere shall be attempted immediately, with especial view to insure the coöperation of the societies. Happy should I be if you and other gentlemen would immediately concur in this endeavour.

I remain, etc.,

WM. WORDSWORTH.

Dorothy Wordsworth to Charles and Mary Lamb

RYDAL MOUNT, 9th Jan., 1830.

My dear Friends,

My nephew John will set off to-morrow evening to Oxford, to take his Master of Arts degree, and thence proceed to London, where his time will be so short that there is no chance of his being able to go to see you ; but there is a possibility that your brother may happen to be in town at the same time. . . .

I do not ask *you*, Miss Lamb, to write, for I know you dislike the office ; but dear Charles L., you whom I have known almost five-and-thirty years, I trust I do not in vain entreat you to let me have the eagerly desired letter at your earliest opportunity, which letter will, we hope, bring us tidings respecting H. C. Robinson. We have not heard anything concerning him since his departure from England, though he promised absolutely to write on his arrival at Rome, and if his intentions were fulfilled, he must have been a resident there for many weeks. Do you see Talfourd ? Does he prosper in his profession ? What family has he ? etc., etc. But I will not particularise persons, but include all in one general inquiry. . . . Tell us of all whom you know, in whom you know us also to be interested, but above all, be very minute in what regards your own dear selves, for there are no persons in the world, exclusive of members of our own family, of whom we think and talk so frequently, or with such delightful remembrances. Your removal to London (though to my thought London is scarcely London without you) shall not prevent my seeing you both in your

own cottage, if I live to go there again ; but at present I have no distant plans leading me thither.

Now that Mr. Monkhouse is gone, we females have no absolute home there, and should we go it will probably be on our own way to the Continent, or to the southern shores of England. Wishes I do now and then indulge of at least revisiting Switzerland, and again crossing the Alps, and even strolling on to Rome. But there is a great change in my feelings respecting plans for the future. If we make any, I entertain them as an amusement perhaps for a short while, but never set my heart upon anything which is to be accomplished three months hence, and have no satisfaction whatever in *schemes*. When one has lived almost sixty years, one is satisfied with present enjoyment and thankful for it, without daring to count on what is to be done six months hence.

My brother and sister are both in excellent health. In *him* there is no failure except the tendency to inflammation in his eyes, which disables him from reading much, or at all by candle-light ; and the use of the pen is irksome to him. However, he has a most competent and willing amanuensis in his daughter, who takes all labour from mother's and aged aunt's hands. His muscular powers are in no degree diminished. Indeed, I think he walks regularly more than ever, finding fresh air the best bracing to his weak eyes. He is still the crack skater on Rydal Lake, and, as to climbing of mountains, the hardest and the youngest are yet hardly a match for him. In composition I can perceive no failure, and his imagination seems as vigorous as in youth ; yet he shrinks from his great work, and both during the last and present winter has been employed in writing small poems. Do not suppose, my dear friend, that I write this boastingly. Far from it. It is in thankfulness for present blessings, yet

always with the sense of the possibility that all will have a sudden check ; and, if not so, the certainty that in the course of man's life but a few years of vigorous health and strength can be allotted to him. For this reason, my sister and I take every opportunity of pressing upon him the necessity of applying to his great work, and this he feels, resolves to do it, and again resolution fails. And now I almost fear habitually that it will be ever so.

I have told you my sister is well, and indeed I think her much stronger than a few years ago. Now that I am for the whole of this winter set aside as a walker she takes my place, and will return from an eight miles' walk with my brother unfatigued. Miss Hutchinson and her sister Joanna are both with us. Miss H. is perfectly well, and Joanna very happy, though she may be always considered an invalid. Her home is in the Isle of Man, and, with the first mild breezes of spring, she intends returning thither, with her sailor brother Henry ; they two (toddling down the hill) together. She is an example for us all. With the better half of her property she purchased Columbian bonds at above 70, gets no interest, will not sell, consequently the cheapness of the little isle tempted her thither on a visit, and she finds the air so suitable for her health, and everything else so much to her mind, that she will, in spite of our unwillingness to part with her, make it her home. As to her lost property, she never regrets it. She has so reduced her wants that she declares she is now richer than she ever was in her life, and so she is. . . . I believe you never saw Joanna, and it is a pity ; for you would have loved her very much. She possesses all the good qualities of the Hutchinsons. My niece Dora is very active, and her father's helper at all times ; and in domestic concerns she takes all the trouble from her mother and me. . . .

52

William Wordsworth to John Wilson[June, 1802.]¹

My dear Sir,

Had it not been for a very amiable modesty, you would not have imagined that your letter could give me any offense. It was on many accounts highly grateful to me. I was pleased to find that I had given so much pleasure to an ingenuous and able mind, and I further considered the enjoyment which you had had from my poems as an earnest that others might be delighted with them in the same or a like manner. It is plain from your letter that the pleasure which I have given you has not been blind or unthinking; you have studied the poems, and prove that you have entered into the spirit of them. They have not given you a cheap or vulgar pleasure; therefore I feel that you are entitled to my kindest thanks for having done some violence to your natural diffidence in the communication which you have made to me.

There is scarcely any part of your letter that does not deserve particular notice; but partly from some constitutional infirmities, and partly from certain habits of mind, I do not write any letters unless upon business, not even to my dearest friends. Except during absence from my own family, I have not written five letters of friendship during the last five years. I have mentioned this in order

¹ This undated letter was sent to John Wilson (Christopher North), from Dove Cottage, Grasmere, early in June, 1802. On the 24th of May Wilson had written from Glasgow University one of the earliest appreciative letters in reference to the *Lyrical Ballads*; and this was Wordsworth's reply to it, some parts being suggested by Dorothy, as it was a joint production. — Ed.

that I may retain your good opinion, should my letter be less minute than you are entitled to expect. You seem to be desirous of my opinion on the influence of natural objects in forming the character of nations. This cannot be understood without first considering their influence upon men in general, first, with reference to such subjects as are common to all countries ; and, next, such as belong exclusively to any particular country, or in a greater degree to it than to another.

Now it is manifest that no human being can be so besotted and debased by oppression, penury, or any other evil which unhumanizes man as to be utterly insensible to the colours, forms, or smell of flowers, the voices and motions of birds and beasts, the appearances of the sky and heavenly bodies, the general warmth of a fine day, the terror and uncomfortableness of a storm, etc. How dead soever many fullgrown men may outwardly seem to these things, all are more or less affected by them ; and in childhood, in the first practice and exercise of their senses, they must have been not the nourishers merely, but often the fathers of their passions. There cannot be a doubt that in tracts of country where images of danger, melancholy, and grandeur, or loveliness, softness, and ease prevail, they will make themselves felt powerfully in forming the characters of the people, so as to produce a uniformity of national character where the nation is small and is not made up of men who, — inhabiting different soils, climates, etc., — by their civil usages and relations, materially interfere with each other. It was so formerly, no doubt, in the Highlands of Scotland ; but we cannot perhaps observe it in our own island at the present day, because, even in the most sequestered places, by manufactures, traffic, religion, law, interchange of inhabitants,

etc., distinctions are done away which would otherwise have been strong and obvious.

This complex state of society does not, however, prevent the characters of individuals from frequently receiving a strong bias, not merely from the impressions of general nature, but also from local objects and images. But it seems that to produce these effects, in the degree in which we frequently find them to be produced, there must be a peculiar sensibility of original organization combining with moral accidents, as is exhibited in *The Brothers* and in *Ruth*,—I mean, to produce this in a marked degree; not that I believe that any man was ever brought up in the country without loving it, especially in his better moments, or in a district of particular grandeur or beauty, without feeling some stronger attachment to it on that account than he would otherwise have felt. I include, you will observe, in these considerations, the influence of climate, changes in the atmosphere and elements, and the labours and occupations which particular districts require.

You begin what you say upon *The Idiot Boy* with this observation, that nothing is a fit subject for poetry which does not please. But here follows a question, Does not please whom? Some have little knowledge of natural imagery of any kind, and, of course, little relish for it; some are disgusted with the very mention of the words "pastoral poetry," "sheep," or "shepherds"; some cannot tolerate a poem with a ghost or any supernatural agency in it; others would shrink from an animated description of the pleasures of love, as from a thing carnal and libidinous; some cannot bear to see delicate and refined feelings ascribed to men in low conditions of society, because their vanity and self-love tell them that these belong only to themselves and men like themselves in dress, station, and

way of life ; others are disgusted with the naked language of some of the most interesting passions of men, because it is either indelicate, or gross, or vulgar ; as many fine ladies could not bear certain expressions in *The Mother*¹ and *The Thorn*, and as in the instance of Adam Smith, who, we are told, could not endure the ballad of *Clym of the Clough*, because the author had not written like a gentleman !

Then there are professional and national prejudices forevermore. Some take no interest in the description of a particular passion or quality, as love of solitariness, we will say, genial activity of fancy, love of nature, religion, and so forth, because they have little or nothing of it in themselves ; and so on without end. I return then to the question, please whom ? or what ? I answer, human nature, as it has been and ever will be. But where are we to find the best measure of this ? I answer, from within ; by stripping our own hearts naked, and by looking out of ourselves towards men who lead the simplest lives, and those most according to nature ; men who have never known false refinements, wayward and artificial desires, false criticisms, effeminate habits of thinking and feeling, or who, having known these things, have outgrown them. This latter class is the most to be depended upon, but it is very small in number.

People in our rank in life are perpetually falling into one sad mistake, namely, that of supposing that human nature and the persons they associate with are one and the same thing. Whom do we generally associate with ? Gentlemen, persons of fortune, professional men, ladies, persons who can afford to buy, or can easily procure, books of half-a-guinea price, hot-pressed, and printed upon superfine paper. These persons are, it is true, a part of human

¹ *The Mother's Return*. — Ed.

nature, but we err lamentably if we suppose them to be fair representatives of the vast mass of human existence. And yet few ever consider books but with reference to their power of pleasing these persons and men of a higher rank ; few descend lower, among cottages and fields, and among children. A man must have done this habitually before his judgment upon *The Idiot Boy* would be in any way decisive with me. I know I have done this myself habitually ; I wrote the poem with exceeding delight and pleasure, and whenever I read it I read it with pleasure.

You have given me praise for having reflected faithfully in my poems the feelings of human nature. I would fain hope that I have done so. But a great poet ought to do more than this : he ought, to a certain degree, to rectify men's feelings, to give them new compositions of feeling, to render their feelings more sane, pure, and permanent, — in short, more consonant to nature, that is, to eternal nature, and the great moving spirit of things. He ought to travel before men occasionally as well as at their sides. I may illustrate this by a reference to natural objects. What false notions have prevailed from generation to generation as to the true character of the nightingale ! As far as my friend's poem in the *Lyrical Ballads* is read, it will contribute greatly to rectify these. You will recollect a passage in Cowper, where, speaking of rural sounds, he says,

And *even* the boding owl
That hails the rising moon has charms for me.

Cowper was passionately fond of natural objects, yet you see he mentions it as a marvelous thing that he could connect pleasure with the cry of the owl. In the same

poem he speaks in the same manner of that beautiful plant, the gorse ; making in some degree an amiable boast of his loving it, *unsightly* and unsmooth as it is. There are many aversions of this kind, which, though they have some foundation in nature, have yet so slight a one that, though they may have prevailed hundreds of years, a philosopher will look upon them as accidents. So with respect to many moral feelings, either of love or dislike. What excessive admiration was paid in former times to personal prowess and military success ! It is so with the latter even at the present day, but surely not nearly so much as heretofore. So with regard to birth, and innumerable other modes of sentiment, civil and religious.

But you will be inclined to ask by this time how all this applies to *The Idiot Boy*. To this I can only say that the loathing and disgust which many people have at the sight of an idiot is a feeling which, though having some foundation in human nature, is not necessarily attached to it in any virtuous degree, but is owing in a great measure to a false delicacy, and, if I may say it without rudeness, a certain amount of comprehensiveness of thinking and feeling. Persons in the lower classes of society have little or nothing of this : if an idiot is born in a poor man's house, it must be taken care of, and cannot be boarded out, as it would be by gentlefolks, or sent to a public or private asylum for such unfortunate beings. Poor people, seeing frequently among their neighbours such objects, easily forget whatever there is of natural disgust about them, and have therefore a sane state, so that without pain or suffering they perform their duties towards them. I could with pleasure pursue this subject, but I must now strictly adopt the plan which I proposed to myself when I began to write this letter, namely, that of

setting down a few hints or memorandums, which you will think of for my sake.

I have often applied to idiots, in my own mind, that sublime expression of Scripture, that their "life is hidden with God." They are worshipped, probably from a feeling of this sort, in several parts of the East. Among the Alps, where they are numerous, they are considered, I believe, as a blessing to the family to which they belong. I have, indeed, often looked upon the conduct of fathers and mothers of the lower classes of society towards idiots as the great triumph of the human heart. It is there that we see the strength, disinterestedness, and grandeur of love; nor have I ever been able to contemplate an object that calls out so many excellent and virtuous sentiments without finding it hallowed thereby, and having something in me which bears down before it, like a deluge, every feeble sensation of disgust and aversion.

There are, in my opinion, several important mistakes in the latter part of your letter which I could have wished to notice; but I find myself much fatigued. These refer both to the Boy and the Mother. I must content myself simply with observing, that it is probable that the principle cause of your dislike to this particular poem lies in the *word* "idiot." If there had been any such word in our language to which we had attached passion, as "lack-wit," "half-wit," "witless," etc., I should have certainly employed it in preference; but there is no such word. Observe (this is entirely in reference to this particular poem), my idiot is not one of those who cannot articulate, or of those that are usually disgusting in their persons:

Whether in cunning or in joy,
And then his words were not a few, etc.

See also the last speech at the end of the poem. The boy whom I had in my mind was by no means disgusting in his appearance, quite the contrary; and I have known several with imperfect faculties who are handsome in their persons and features. There is one, at present, within a mile of my own house, who is remarkably so, though he has something of a stare and vacancy in his countenance.

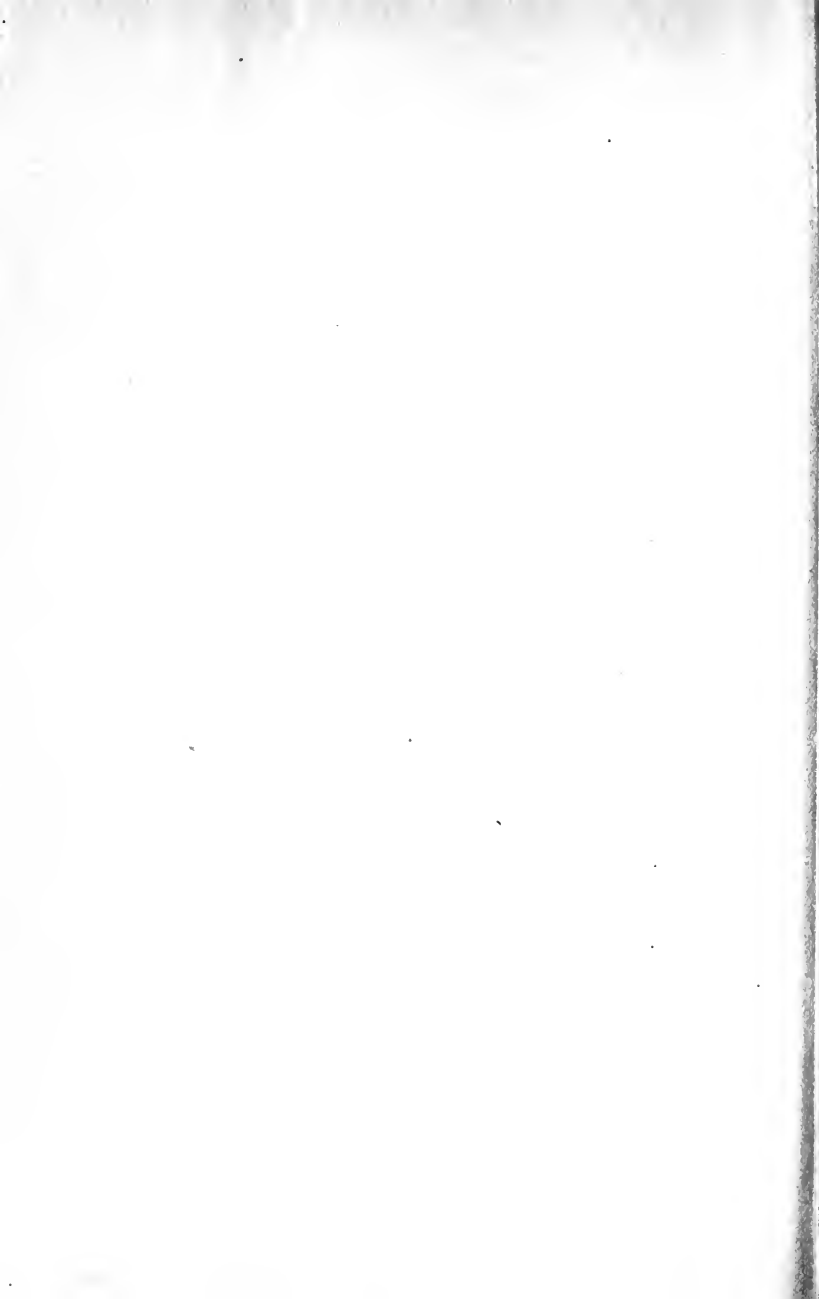
A friend of mine knowing that some persons had a dislike to the poem, such as you have expressed, advised me to add a stanza, describing the person of the boy so as to entirely separate him in the imaginations of my readers from that class of idiots who are disgusting in their persons; but the narration in the poem is so rapid and impassioned, that I could not find a place in which to insert the stanza without checking the progress of the poem and so leaving a deadness upon the feeling. This poem has, I know, frequently produced the same effect as it did upon you and your friends; but there are many also to whom it affords exquisite delight, and who, indeed, prefer it to any other of my poems. This proves that the feelings there delineated are such as men *may* sympathise with. This is enough for my purpose.) It is not enough for me as a poet to delineate merely such feelings as all men *do* sympathise with; but it is also highly desirable to add to these others, such as all men *may* sympathise with, and such as there is reason to believe they would be better and more moral beings if they did sympathise with.

✓ I conclude with regret, because I have not said one half of what I intended to say; but I am sure you will deem my excuse sufficient, when I inform you that my head aches violently, and I am in other respects unwell. I must, however, again give you my warmest thanks for

your kind letter. I shall be happy to hear from you again, and do not think it unreasonable that I should request a letter from you when I feel that the answer which I may make to it will not be above three or four lines. This I mention to you with frankness, and you will not take it ill after what I have before said of my remissness in writing letters. I am, dear sir, with great respect,

Yours sincerely,

W. WORDSWORTH.



APPENDIX II

1

*William Wordsworth to Samuel Taylor Coleridge*¹

CHRISTMAS EVE, GRASMERE [1799].

My dearest Coleridge,

We arrived here last Friday, and have now been four days in our new abode without writing to you; a long time! but we have been in such confusion as not to have had a moment's leisure. We found two letters from you, one of which I had heard of at Sockburn. I do not think there is much cause to be uneasy about Cooke's affair. As he has not answered my letter, I cannot but say I am

¹ Addressed to Mr. Coleridge

No. 21 Buckingham Street

Strand, London

Postmark, Kendal, Jan. 3, 1800.

There was a rough draft of this letter, and of that draft Christopher Wordsworth printed the larger part in the *Memoirs* of his uncle (see Vol. I, pp. 149-154). He appears not to have seen the letter that was actually sent. At the beginning he inaccurately interpolates the words "on the evening of St. Thomas' day." Christmas Day, 1799, fell on a Wednesday. The travellers left Sockburn on the morning of Tuesday, Dec. 17, slept that night at Askrigg, on the 18th at Sedbergh, on the 19th at Kendal, and arrived at Grasmere on the 20th of December, 1799.

Hardrane should be Hardraw, as Wm. Wordsworth wrote it both in the letter and in the draft.

G. G. W. Nov. 4, 1906.

sorry I mentioned your name ; feeling so forcibly as I did, that if any man had reason to suppose I could be of service to him, he would gain incalculably by the proposed change, I was betrayed into language not sufficiently considerate and reserved. If it is in my power to remedy any part of the evil by writing again to Cooke, or in any other way, pray mention it to me.

I arrived at Sockburn the day after you quitted it. I scarcely knew whether to be sorry or not that you were no longer there, as it would have been a great pain to me to have parted from you. I was sadly disappointed in not finding Dorothy. Mary was a solitary house-keeper, and overjoyed to see me. Dorothy is now sitting by me, racked with toothache. This is a grievous misfortune, as she has so much work for her needle among the bed-curtains, etc. We have both caught troublesome colds in our new and almost empty house ; but we hope to make it a comfortable dwelling. Our first two days were days of fear, as one of the rooms upstairs smoked like a furnace. We have since learned that it is uninhabitable as a sitting room, on this account. The other room, however, which is fortunately the one we intended for our living room, promises uncommonly well ; that is, the chimney draws perfectly, and does not even smoke at the first lighting of the fire. In particular winds most likely we shall have puffs of inconvenience ; but this I believe will be found a curable evil, by means of devils — as they are called — and other beneficent agents, which we shall station at the top of the chimney if their devices should be required. Dorothy is much pleased with the house and appurtenances, the orchard especially. In imagination she has already built a seat, with a summer shed, on the highest platform in this our little domestic slip of mountain. The

spot commands a view, over the roof of our house, of the lake, the church, Helmcrag, and two thirds of the vale. We mean also to enclose the two or three yards of ground between us and the road; this for the sake of a few flowers, and because it will make it more our own.

Besides, am I fanciful when I would extend the obligation of gratitude to insensate things? May not a man have a solitary pleasure in doing something gratuitously for the sake of his house, as for an individual to which he owes so much? The manners of the neighboring cottagers have far exceeded our expectations. They seem little adulterated; indeed, so far as we have seen, not at all. The people we have uniformly found kind-hearted, frank, and manly; prompt to serve, without servility. This is but an experience of four days, but we have had dealings with persons of various occupations, and have had no reason whatever to complain. We do not think it will be necessary for us to keep a servant. We have agreed to give a woman, who lives in one of the adjoining cottages, two shillings a week for attending two or three hours a day to light the fires, wash dishes, etc., etc. In addition to this she is to have her victuals every Saturday, when she will be employed in scouring, and to have her victuals likewise on other days if we should have visitors, and she is wanted more than usual. We could have had this attendance for eighteen pence a week, but we added the sixpence for the sake of the poor woman, who is made happy by it. The weather since our arrival has been a keen frost. One morning two thirds of the lake was covered with ice, which continued all the day; but, to our great surprise, the next morning — though there was no intermission of the frost — it had entirely disappeared. The ice had been so thin that the wind had broken it up, and most likely

driven it to the outlet of the lake. Rydal is covered with ice, clear as polished steel. I have procured a pair of skates and to-morrow mean to give my body to the wind ; not however without reasonable caution. We are looking for John every day ; it will [be] a pity, if he should come, that Dorothy is so much engaged. She has scarcely been out since our arrival ; one evening I tempted her forth ; the planet Jupiter was on the top of the hugest of the Rydal mountains.

We were highly pleased with your last short letter, which we had confidently and eagerly expected at Sockburn. Stuart's conduct is liberal, and I hope it will answer for him. You make no mention of your health. I was uneasy on that account when you were with us ; upon recollection it seemed to me that the fatigues, accidents, and exposures attendant upon our journey took greater hold of you than they ought to have done, had your habit of body been such as not to render caution necessary for it. Your account of Pinney¹ is not more than I should have expected, as I know him to be an excellent man. I received a letter from him enclosing a five-pound note, and informing me he hoped soon to be able to render me more substantial assistance. I wrote to him requesting him to use all his interest to induce M.² to repay the principal, etc., and that if it was his intention to do anything to disentangle M. from his embarrassments I recommended him to consider my claim. We shall be glad to receive the German books, though it will be at least three weeks before Dorothy will have any leisure to begin. Your selection of names in your history

¹ Doubtless the Mr. Pinney of Bristol to whom Racedown belonged. See the letter of Coleridge to Josiah Wedgwood, Feb. 4, 1800. — Ed.

² Basil Montagu. — Ed.

of the eminent men with whom you dined entertained me much, — a wretched painter, a worse philosopher, and a respectable bone-setter. This last I mention merely for the sake of eking out my sentence, as I venerate the profession of a surgeon, and deem it the only one which has anything that deserves the name of utility in it. I suspect that it may partly be owing to something like unconscious affectation, but in honest truth I feel little disposed to notice what you say of *Lyrical Ballads*, though the account when I first read it gave me pleasure. The said Mr. G. I have often heard described as a puppy, one of the fawning, flattering kind; in short, a polite liar, often perhaps without knowing himself to be so. Accordingly he would snatch at an opportunity of saying anything agreeable to your friend, etc. Ergo, the account is smoke or something near it. You do not speak of your travelling conversations. I have begun the pastoral of Bateman.¹ In my next letter I shall probably be able to send it to you. I am afraid it will have one fault, that of being too long. As to the Tragedy,² and *Peter Bell*, Dorothy will do all in her power to put them forward. Composition I find invariably pernicious to me, and even penmanship, if continued for any length of time at one sitting. I shall therefore wish you good night, my beloved friend; a wish, with a thousand others, in which Dorothy joins me. I am afraid half of what I have written is illegible. Farewell.

¹ Evidently the poem afterwards entitled *Michael*. The 258th line of this "pastoral poem" supplies the only existing clue to this allusion.

There's Richard Bateman, thought she to herself.

Its composition occupied Wordsworth during October, November, and December of 1800. It was first published in the *Lyrical Ballads, with other Poems*, of 1800. — Ed.

² *The Borderers*. — Ed.

Friday Evening. We have been overhead in confusion, painting the rooms, mending the doors, and Heaven knows what! This, however, shall not prevent me from attempting to give you some account of our journey hither. We left Sockburn on the Tuesday before last, early in the morning; D. on a double horse, behind that good creature George, and I upon Lilly, or Violet as Cottle calls her. We crossed the Tees in the Sockburn fields by moonlight. George accompanied us eight miles beyond Richmond, and there we parted with sorrowful hearts. We were now in Wensleydale. . . .

And then the murmur of the water, the quiet, the seclusion, and a long summer day to dream in! . . . Have I not tired you? With difficulty we tore ourselves away, and on returning to the cottage we found we had been absent an hour. 'T was a short one to us; we were in high spirits, and off we drove, and will you believe me when I tell you that we walked the next ten miles, by the watch, over a high mountain road, thanks to the wind that drove behind us and the good road, in two hours and a quarter, a marvellous feat of which D. will long tell! Well! we rested in a tempting inn, close by Garsdale chapel, a lowly house of prayer in a charming little valley. Here we stopped a quarter of an hour and then off to Sedbergh, seven miles farther, in an hour and thirty-five minutes. The wind was still at our backs and the road delightful. I must hurry on. Next morning we walked to Kendal, eleven miles, a terrible up and down road, in three hours, and after buying and ordering furniture, the next day by half past four we reached Grasmere in a post chaise. So ends my long story.

God bless you,

W. W.

[Dorothy writes :] Write, I pray you. God bless you. Love to Mrs. Coleridge and a kiss for Hartley.

D. W.

[William writes :] Take no pains to contradict the story that the L. B. are entirely yours. Such a rumour is the best thing that can befall them. Poor Cottle ! of this enough.

2

William and Dorothy Wordsworth to Samuel Taylor Coleridge

Friday Eve, or rather Night.

[No address, or date, probably early in 1801.]

[William writes :]

My dear Coleridge,

Night it is, and Dorothy and I have been very foolish in putting off writing to you till this time; in fact we have been drinking tea at Mr. Loughs, and the expectation of a letter from the Hutchinsons induced us to accompany the Lloyds (who were at Loughs also) as far as Rydal. Now, as a letter is not so heavy or so bulky an article as to require the portorage of two persons, it would have been quite sufficient if one of us had gone; and, in the meantime, the other might have been employed in writing to you. But so it was; *hinc illae lacrymae*, as Partridge learnedly citeth from one of the ancients. It is now past ten, and we are both tired, so that it is an absolute contest of politeness, with a little brotherly kindness interspersed, which of us is to walk up to Fletcher's with this letter and the accompanying parcel. We cannot *both* go, as we have suffered Molly to retire to cover, and little

Hartley cannot be left. These several displays of presence of mind in this antithetical way are highly entertaining. Dorothy is packing up a few small loaves of our American flour. As to the supper-cake which I promised, it died of a very common malady, bad advice. The oven must be hot, perfectly hot, said Molly the experienced, so into a piping red-hot oven it went, and came out (but I hate antithesis, in colours especially) black as a genuine child of the coal hole. In plain English, it is not a sendable article.

[Dorothy writes :] I take the pen, having put up the bread and a few baked trouts, the first trouts we have had this season. Poor John, dear John ! we think of him whenever we see the shape of a trout. He has at last a prospect of sailing. I learn from my Aunt Cookson that a seventy-four gun ship is ordered to convey them all the way. She had this intelligence from himself. God bless you ! dear Coleridge. We are sadly grieved for your poor eyes and the rest of your complaints, but we sorrow not without hope. Oh, for one letter of perfect uncomplainingness ! We did not write on Tuesday, because we had much to do and little to say. I wish I had more time now. I could talk to you a long time about Hartley. Dear little fellow ! he is well and happy. He has slept very quietly at nights ever since you were here, only he is long in falling asleep. He talks a great deal about Mrs. Wilson. Tell her that I am sure he can never forget her. If he had not been in bed and asleep, he would gladly have written her a letter. We hope Mrs. Coleridge and Derwent continue well. Give our kind love to Mrs. Coleridge and kisses to the bairn. The boat is painted with great taste, and the paint sent is twice too much, but

we shall keep it for the house. Poor William ! We have put aside all the manuscript poems, and it is agreed between us that I am not to give them up to him even if he asks for them. The enclosed letter from the sisters will not give you much pleasure, as it is chiefly about their sister Betsy.

Good night, dear Coleridge. We are very sorry we have not time to write you a better letter.

W. AND D. WORDSWORTH.

3

William and Dorothy Wordsworth to Samuel Taylor Coleridge

April 16, 1802.

My dear Coleridge,

I parted with Mary on Monday afternoon about six o'clock, a little on this side Rushyford. Poor creature ! she would have an ugly storm of sleet and snow to encounter, and I am anxious to hear how she reached home. Soon after I missed my road in the midst of the storm. Some people at a house where I called directed me how to regain the road through the fields ; and alas ! as you may guess, I fared worse and worse. With the loss of half an hour's time and with no little anxiety I regained the road. Unfortunately, not far from St. Helen's Auckland, the horse came down with me on his knees ; but not so as to fall overhead himself or to throw me. Poor beast ! it was no fault of his. A chaise-driver of whom I inquired the next day told me it was a wonder he could travel at all, he wanted shoeing so sadly, and his hoofs cleaning and paring. I was so ignorant as not to know that a horse might stand in need of new shoes,

though the old ones might not be loose. Except for this accident he carried me very well, better twenty times over than could be expected from a horse in that condition. The horse is certainly well worth what Calvert¹ asks for him, and not in my estimation to be at all worse thought of for this accident. I would wish you to buy him on this account, if you can conveniently; and I will make up any loss if he should not happen to suit you. He seems shy, as if he had not been well broken; but I did not discover any vice in him. Between the beginning of Lord Darlington's park at Raby and two or three miles beyond Staindrop, I wrote the poem which you will find on the opposite page.² I reached Barnard Castle about half past ten, but I mistook the inn. I was, however, well treated, but I wished to have been at the old one where we were together. Between eight and nine next evening I reached Ensemere, more tired than I should otherwise have been, on account of not being able to ride fast for the horse's shoes. Yesterday after dinner we set off on foot, meaning to sleep at Porterdale; a storm came on when we were within two miles of the inn, and we were sadly wet; we had a good supper and good beds, but they and the breakfast cost us seven shillings,—too much! This morning was delightful; we set off about half past ten and walked slow with many rests; I wrote the little description you will find overleaf² during one of them. At Ambleside we called on the Luffs, to see how Luff was; but hearing that the Boddingtons were upstairs, we did not see either Luff or his wife. He has been dangerously ill, but is now recovering fast. We reached

¹ William, Raisley Calvert's brother. — Ed.

² *The Glow-worm*, published in 1807, and then suppressed. See Eversley edition of *Poetical Works*, Vol. VIII, pp. 230-232. — Ed.

home at dusk. So ends my story. Now for a word about yourself. I am very sorry indeed you have been poorly. Let us see you as soon as ever you find an inclination to come over. I was much pleased with your verses in D.'s letter; there is an admirable simplicity in the language of the first fragment, and I wish there had been more of the second; the fourth line wants mending sadly — in other respects the lines are good. The extract from Pliny is very judicious. I remember having the same opinion of Pliny's Letters which you have expressed when I read them many years ago. Farewell, my dear, dear friend.

Among all lovely things my Love had been,
Had noted well the stars, all flowers that grew
About her home, but she had never seen
A glow-worm, never once, and this I knew.

While I was riding on a stormy night,
Not far from her abode, I chanced to spy
A single glow-worm once; and at the sight
Down from my horse I leapt, great joy had I.

I laid the glow-worm gently on a leaf,
And bore it with me through the stormy night
In my left hand, without dismay or grief,
Shining albeit with a fainter light.

When to the dwelling of my Love I came,
I went into the orchard quietly,
And left the glow-worm, blessing it by name,
Laid safely by itself, beneath a tree.

The whole next day I hop'd and hop'd with fear;
At night the glow-worm shone beneath the tree:
I led my Emma to the place, — "Look here!" —
O joy it was for her, and joy for me!

The incident of this poem took place about seven years ago between Dorothy and me.¹

4

*Dorothy, William, and Mary Wordsworth to Samuel Taylor Coleridge*²

Tuesday Evening, 6th March, half past seven o'clock, [1804]

[Dorothy writes:]

My dear Friend,

We have waited post after post in expectation of another letter from you. In so doing I feel that we have done wrong; for I begin to write now as a duty, rather than a work of pleasure and sympathy. But why have you not written to us again? We learn from Sara Hutchinson that you have seen Dr. Beddoes, from which we conclude that you are returned to London, and, as she says nothing to the contrary, that you were tolerably well. We have had no note from Mrs. Coleridge for several carrier-days, but she sent us word on Saturday that she had not heard

¹ This letter was left unsigned by Wordsworth. The poems in it are copied in the handwriting of Dorothy, whose references in her *Journal* to them, and what gave rise to them, may be consulted (see Vol. II, pp. 105-108). At the close of her copy of the poem "written while resting on the bridge near the foot of Brother's Water, between one and two o'clock at noon, April 16, 1802," she writes, "We cannot put the book under the door. God bless you! D. W." This letter must have been written at night. (See the sentence "we reached home at dusk.") The previous letter refers to their habit of walking up to "Fletcher's," with letters for Keswick, and Mr. Gordon Wordsworth suggests to me that "these words were written in the knowledge that Fletcher's house would be shut up for the night when they reached it."—Ed.

² No date or postmark to this letter. It is addressed to Mr. Coleridge, No. 16 Abingdon Street, Westminster.—Ed.

from you. I am sorry you have left Dumnow, because the Beaumonts are so good and kind-hearted that I think you must there have had home feelings about you, something like being amongst us ; and surely you might, at their house in the country, have more time to yourself, and more quiet for going on with your work (independent of the chance of better health) than in London. I wish you would stay there till you go to Sicily, if you can. We have transcribed all William's smaller poems for you, and have begun the poem on his life,¹ and *The Pedlar* ;² but before we send them off we mean to take another copy for ourselves, for they are scattered about here and there, in this book and in that ; one stanza on one leaf, another on another, which makes the transcribing more than twice the trouble ; besides the comfort of having them all in one or two nice volumes. It will, I am sure, give William great pleasure to send some of his poems to Lady Beaumont, and we shall be most glad to copy them when the necessary business is over. Indeed I do not know what I should *not* like to do for so amiable a woman, one who has been so tender and kind to you. My head aches, so dearest Coleridge forgive me for sending you a short and meagre letter. Mary and I have been spending two hours this afternoon among crowds of men, women, and children with the smell of gin, rum, brandy, and tobacco, and endless din all about us. Furthermore, I had a four hours' walk in the morning. In the afternoon we were at Borwick's sale. He is broken up, and the house is taken by the people of the Nag's Head of Wytheburn.

In the morning William and I had so much enjoyment that regrets forced themselves on us continually that you were not with us, at least had not seen the place where we

¹ *The Prelude*.— Ed.

² *The Excursion*.— Ed.

were. Mary is to go to-morrow. William found it out by himself. It is a little slip of the river above Rydal that makes the famous waterfalls, about two hundred yards in length. It is high up towards the mountains, where one would not have expected any trees to be ; and down it tumbles among rocks and trees, trees of all shapes, elegant birches and ancient oaks, that have grown as tall as the storms would let them, and are now decaying away, their naked branches like shattered lances, or the whole tree like a thing hacked or dismantled, as William says to impale malefactors upon. On one of them was an old glead's¹ nest. With these are green hollies and junipers, a little waterfall, endless, endless waterbreaks, now a rock starting forward, now an old tree, enough to look at for hours, and then the whole scene in a long prospect. It is a miniature of all that can be conceived of savage and grand about a river, with a great deal of the beautiful. William says that whatever Salvator might desire could there be found. He longed for Sir George Beaumont ; but, if it is not seen in winter,² it would be nothing. By the bye, I must write well and tell you that the bridge builder was called Willy-good-walter. I forgot to add that it was a sort of wonder in rural architecture, having been built without lime, or mortar, and without a frame.

Mary, though very thin, and not very strong, is on the whole well. . . . The babe is flourishing and healthy. He is indeed as noble a creature as ever was beheld, the joy and comfort of us all. . . . You will be delighted to hear

¹ The kite, a bird of prey. — Ed.

² Mr. Gordon Wordsworth writes to me : "I have explored the whole of the 'little slip of the river above Rydal,' and come to the conclusion that she refers to the 200 or 250 yards immediately below Mirror Pool, or Buxton's Jumb, of which she gives a description faithful to this day." — Ed.

that he is far more happy when we leave him to himself upon the carpet with a good store of playthings than when he is upon our knees. Give him but a work-basket full of tape and thread and other oddments, and he riots among them like a little pussy-cat. His countenance is very intelligent. Could you but see him look up at you when he is sitting upon the ground, it would fill your heart top-full of pleasure. . . . Farewell, my beloved friend. William, who is sitting beside me reading *Hamlet* — (we are both at the little green round table by the fireside, the watch ticking above our heads. Mary is with the sleeping baby below stairs, writing to Sara) — William exhorts me to give over writing; so farewell, my dearest Coleridge. May God bless you! and your faithful and affectionate Dorothy Wordsworth.

Kind love to the Lambs. I hope you have talked to Mary Lamb about my regard for her, and my *seeming* neglect in not writing to her.

William gets on rapidly with his poem. It is truly delightful, and makes us all happy. I am about to read Shakespeare through, and have read many of the plays; so you see I do not absolutely do nothing. This I tell you, because I know it will give you pleasure. The Journal¹ is at a stand at present on account of the copying.

[William writes:]

Dearest Coleridge,

We are very anxious to hear from you. . . . I finished five or six days ago another book of my poem,² amounting to six hundred and fifty lines. And now I am positively arrived at the subject I spoke of in my last. When this

¹ The Journal of the *Tour in Scotland in 1803*. — Ed.

² *The Prelude*. — Ed.

next book is done, which I shall begin in two or three days' time, I shall consider the work as finished. Farewell. I am very anxious to have your notes for *The Recluse*. I cannot say how much importance I attach to this, if it should please God that I survive you. I should reproach myself forever in writing the work if I had neglected to procure this help.

[Mary writes :] God in heaven bless you, my dear, dear friend ! I am just going to get ready to go with W. to see the beautiful scenery beyond Rydal. Oh, that you were here to accompany us ! With my bairn upon my knee, again I say, God bless you.

M. W.

5

Dorothy and William Wordsworth to Samuel Taylor Coleridge

March 29, 1804.¹

[Dorothy writes :]

My dearest Coleridge,

There is little chance that this letter will reach you :² therefore I shall write but a few words. Our hearts are full of you. May God preserve you, and restore you to us, in health of body and peace of mind ! I cannot express to you how deeply we were shocked at your late terrible attack, nor how very thankful we are to the Beaumonts for their kindness to you. Indeed I love them most affectionately for it. We have had the severest gales of

¹ Addressed to "Mr. Coleridge, Post Office, Portsmouth, to remain till called for." Postmark, Keswick, April 3, 1804. — Ed.

² As Coleridge was on the eve of his departure for Malta, etc. — Ed.

wind that we remember this winter in the beginning of the week. At first we did not know but that you might be out at sea in them, and we were happy indeed to hear that you were not. Your letter informing us of the arrival of all the poems¹ did not reach us so soon as it ought to have done by several days. It had been mis-sent to Keswick.

William has begun another part of the poem addressed to you.² He has written some very affecting lines, which I wish you could have taken with you. He is perfectly well at present, works in the garden, and walks daily. To-day Mary, John, William, and I had a walk together in Bainriggs, and after we left W. he wrote twenty lines in the three quarters of an hour before dinner. John is a rosy-cheeked fellow, very strong, happy as a bird in the open air, and delights in every sound he hears, — the crows high up in the sky, the wind in the trees, the little sykes³ by the roadsides. He is of an impatient temper. . . . We hope to see Sara for a couple of days next week. In about a fortnight I am to go to her, to help her to put her house in order ; and a short time after my return home, when spring comes in with warm weather, we are all to go to see her. Mrs. Coleridge in her last letter said she would come over with the children. . . . Could you but see them playing with our Grasmere darling ! . . . I am going on with my *Journal*. I wish I could send you a copy of it when it is done. It is a tiresome thing to read long descriptions of places, but in Italy it would not seem tiresome, so far, far from us. If you get this letter, write to us yet once again ; and never, dearest friend ! never miss an

¹ A copy of Wordsworth's poems in MS. sent to Coleridge to take with him to Italy. — Ed.

² *The Prelude*. — Ed.

³ Streams. — Ed.

opportunity of writing when you are abroad. This letter is but of memorandums, for I feel almost confident that it will not reach you. If it does, tell us what you have done about the Border Poems, the watch, etc., etc.

Farewell, my beloved Coleridge, dear friend, farewell. Believe me evermore your faithful friend,

DOROTHY WORDSWORTH.

GRASMERE, March 29.

[William writes :]

My dearest Coleridge,

Your last letter but one informing us of your late attack was the severest shock to me I think I have ever received. I walked over for the letter myself to Rydal and had a most affecting return home, in thinking of you and your narrow escape. I will not speak of other thoughts that passed through me, but I cannot help saying that I would gladly have given three fourths of my possessions for your letter on *The Recluse* at that time. I cannot say what a load it would be to me, should I survive you and you die without this memorial left behind. Do, for heaven's sake, put this out of the reach of accident immediately. We are most happy that you have gotten the poems, and that they have already given you so much pleasure. Heaven bless you for ever and ever. No words can express what I feel at this moment. Farewell, farewell, farewell.

W. W.

The poems were transcribed in a great hurry and I find on looking at our copy, which was made at the same time, that several lines have been overlooked here and there. One of the most important in the sonnet to Toussaint,

Though fallen thyself never to rise again,

is omitted. In the fifth book of the poem to you,¹ after "fear itself," "natural or supernatural alike" is to be omitted

Upon a gossamer thread, boundless th' embrace
Of his intelligence he sifts, etc.²

In the same book,

Too learned or too good ; but wanton fresh
And bandied up and down by love and hate,³

was omitted in my copy.

I ought to have asked your permission for the scholars and their obolus, etc.⁴ I am now, after a halt of nearly three weeks, started again ; and I hope to go forward rapidly. Adieu again, and again, and again.

We entreat you to write for ever and ever, and at all opportunities. But this request must be unnecessary. We shall be so distressingly anxious.

It was very fortunate that you were so earnest about having the poems. It was an intricate and weary job ; but I do think that one half of those last three books were preserved by it. I shall never, I hope, get into such a scrape again.

¹ *The Prelude*. — Ed.

² See Book V, l. 322. — Ed.

³ See Book V, ll. 412-413. — Ed.

⁴ See Book III, l. 476. — Ed.

6

William Wordsworth to Samuel Taylor Coleridge

GRASMERE, Monday Morning, April 19th, 1808.¹

My dearest Coleridge,

Last night brought us your letters (under cover from Sharp).² I am quite vexed that my letter sent on the Friday evening, two days after my arrival here, has never reached you, and I am quite at a loss to account for it. You ought to have received that letter on Monday morning, i.e. a week and a day after I left you. This is the more vexatious because we cannot discover where the fault lies; the letter was not directed to Lamb, but to yourself at the *Courier* office. The present is the fourth letter I have written to you since my arrival at Kendal, — one from Kendal, one by the first post after my arrival here, viz. Friday, a third by last Saturday's post sent via Keswick; besides a few lines I added to a letter of Dorothy's sent off eight days ago. These letters have all, except the first, been directed to Lamb, but I suspect the fault is in our Ambleside post. Enough of this, but pray ask Sir George Beaumont if he has received a letter from me, for I wrote one and sent it by the same person who carried the Friday's letter to you, which has been lost.

¹ This letter was addressed to S. T. Coleridge Esq., *Courier* Office, Strand, London.

It bears the postmark, Kendal, April 23, 1808. April 19 was a Tuesday. The letter was probably written on Monday the 18th, and the postscripts added the next day. Such mistakes were common at Town End. Wordsworth appears to have left London on Sunday, April 3d; to have reached Kendal on Tuesday, the 5th; and Grasmere on Wednesday, the 6th. — Ed.

² Richard Sharp. See his letter of April 13, 1808, in Vol. I. — Ed.

. . . If I thought that after what has been said, you could command your attention to any other subject, I should with more satisfaction to myself go on to tell you that considerable exertions have been made to serve the orphan Greens ; a paper which I drew up has been circulated, and a subscription solicited with good success. I sent an abridgment of this paper to Sharp, to Montagu, to Wrangham, and even to Lady Holland, and mean to send one to Rogers. One shall be sent to you, to which you may add such particulars from Dorothy's letters as you may think serviceable, and you will effectually aid us. The children are the admiration of everybody for their innocence, affectionate disposition, and good behaviour. As soon as she has leisure Dorothy means to draw up a minute detail of all that she knows concerning the lives and characters of the husband and wife, and everything relating to their melancholy end, and its effect upon the inhabitants of this vale, — a story that will be rich both in pleasure and profit. Within a day or two after my return home, when my mind was easier than it has been since, in passing through the churchyard I stopped at the grave of the poor sufferers and immediately afterwards composed the following stanzas ; *composed* I have said. I ought rather to have said *effused*, for it is the mere pouring out of my own feeling ; but if you can turn these verses to profit for the poor orphans in any way, either by recitation, circulating in manuscript, or publishing them, either with or without the name of the author, pray do.¹

. . . I come now to *The White Doe*. In compliance with frequent entreaties I took the MSS. to the Lambs, to read it, or part of it, one evening. There unluckily I found

¹ For these *Elegiac Stanzas*, here transcribed in pencil by Dorothy, see *Poetical Works*, Eversley edition, Vol. VIII, pp. 267-269.— Ed.

Hazlitt, and his beloved ; of course though I had the poem in my hand I declined, nay absolutely refused, to read it. But as they were very earnest in entreating me, I at last consented to read one book, and when it was done I said . . . that I did not think the poem could ever be popular just because there was nothing in it to excite curiosity, and next because the main catastrophe was not a material but an intellectual one. I said further that it could not be popular because some of the principal objects and agents — such as the banner and the Doe — produced their influences and effects not by powers naturally inherent in them, but such as they were endued with by the imagination of the human minds on whom they operated : further, that the principle of action in all the characters, as in the old man, and his sons, and Francis, — when he has the prophetic vision of the overthrow of his family, and the fate of his sister, and takes leave of her as he does, — was throughout imaginative, and that all action (save the main traditionary tragedy), i.e. all the action proceeding from the will of chief agents, was fine-spun and unobtrusive ; consonant in this to the principle from which it flowed, and in harmony with the shadowy influence of the Doe, by whom the poem is introduced, and in whom it ends. It suffices that everything tends to account for the weekly pilgrimage of the Doe, which is made interesting by its connection with a human being, a woman ; who is intended to be honoured and loved for what she *endures*, and the manner in which she endures it. She accomplishes a conquest over her own sorrows (which is the true subject of the poem) partly by the native strength of her character, and partly by the persons and things with whom and with which she is connected ; and finally, after having exhibited the “fortitude

of patience and heroic martyrdom," ascending to pure ethereal spirituality, and forwarded in that ascent of love by communion with a creature not of her own species, but spotless beautiful innocent and loving in that temper of earthly love to which alone she can conform, without violation to the majesty of her losses, or degradation from those heights of heavenly serenity to which she has been raised.

... When it is considered what has already been executed in poetry it is strange that a man cannot perceive, particularly when the present tendencies of society (good and bad) are observed, that this is the time when a man of genius may honourably take a station upon different ground. If he is to be a dramatist, let him crowd his scene with gross and visible action; but if a narrative poet, — if the poet is to be predominant over the dramatist, — then let him see if there are no victories in the world of spirit; no changes, commotions, revolutions there, no fluxes and refluxes of the thoughts which may be made interesting by modest combination with the stiller actions of the bodily frame; or with the gentler movements and milder appearances of society and social intercourse, or the still more mild and gentle solicitations of irrational and inanimate nature. But too much of this. Farewell.

Most tenderly yours,

W. WORDSWORTH.

7

William Wordsworth to Samuel Taylor Coleridge

Early in May (probably 5th), 1809.

My dear Coleridge,

I am very sorry to hear of your being taken ill again, were it only on account of the effect these seizures may have upon the work in which you are engaged. They prove that it is *absolutely necessary* that you should always be *beforehand* with your work. On the general question of your health one thing is obvious, namely, that health of mind—that is, resolution, self-denial, and well-regulated conditions of feeling—are what you must depend upon; that doctors can do you little or no good, and that doctors' stuff has been one of your greatest curses; and, of course, of ours through you. I would not now speak upon this subject, were it not on account of what you say about Mr. Harrison. You must know better than Mr. Harrison, Mr. King, or any surgeon, what is to do you good, what you are to do, and what to leave undone. Do not look out of yourself for that stay which can only be found within.

I have had a strong inclination to walk over to Keswick lately for many reasons, one of which you will scarcely guess. Turning over an old magazine three or four days ago, I hit upon a paragraph stating that B. Flower had been fined £100, and committed to Newgate for four months, for reflecting on the union with Ireland in some comments upon a speech of the Bishop of Llandaff. This brought Gilbert Wakefield to my mind, and his four years' imprisonment in Dorsetshire gaol; and led me to review in my thoughts what I had written in the pamphlet, not without

a reference to the possibility of my being subject to the like chastisement by an incensed government, or prosecution of an angry individual. I could not recollect any passage but one from which there seemed much to apprehend. It is as follows. "I say that we (the people of England) did not look for the punishment of the men who had signed and ratified the convention to gratify any feelings of vindictive justice, for these, if they could have existed in such a case, had been abundantly appeased already, for what punishment could be greater than to have brought upon themselves the *unremovable hatred and contempt* of their countrymen, etc." I cannot remember what follows, but it is to this purpose that by judicial punishment of the authors our detestation of the fact might be more emphatically expressed, or made more signally manifest. The words marked in italics I fear for, and on this account. It has pleased his Majesty's Ministers, to their utter disgrace, to send back Wellesley to Portugal, and to make him general in chief there. When I bear in mind what Sidmouth said in the House of Lords, that the character of Sir Arthur Wellesley and some others were precious deposits in the hands of their country, I cannot doubt with what dispositions the government would regard expressions of this kind.

Mr. De Quincey says in his last letter that he hopes the pamphlet would be out the day before yesterday. It was not till that very day that these thoughts struck me in this light, and I immediately wrote to Stuart to request he would look over the pamphlet to see if there was anything in it for which it was likely I should be prosecuted; and, if it should not be published, to cancel *this* leaf, if he thought proper, and soften the expression. Now the reason which induced me to use this language was not

intemperate indignation, but a deep conviction of the importance of keeping — in cases of this kind — as clear a distinction as possible in the minds of men between disapprobation of vice and hatred of the vicious person, of crime and of the criminal. In private life, where we may have been personally piqued or injured, it may be well to encourage relenting and forgiving dispositions, for many reasons, and not the least for this, that, in cases which only concern ourselves, we are much more likely to form precipitate and erroneous notions. But in public offenses, under settled governments, there is no feeling more to be dreaded than this disposition to forgive and to relent. It approaches the mind under the mask of charity, humanity, and so forth ; but it is at bottom nothing but remissness, indolence, weakness, and cowardice, — an inability to keep the mind steadfastly fixed on its object. Accordingly, duties which it would be laborious to discharge and difficulties which it would be hard to overcome are all gotten rid of at once with this flattering promise, that the future will make amends and set all things right of itself. And so, were it merely to avoid the trouble of changing, we start afresh with the same crazy or vicious cattle as before. I have no doubt that one victory gained by Sir A. W. would blot out all remembrance of his former transactions ; and yet, what would ten victories avail, if the moral spirit continues the same ?

You would see the proclamation published by the Portuguese government guarding the nation against insidious persons who were propagating reports to the prejudice of the English in respect to their intentions towards the Portuguese, and denouncing the severest punishment against those who should spread or countenance such calumnies. Neither the English nor the sound part of

the Portuguese nation need have cared a straw for these reports, had the English behaved with common decency towards the Portuguese, but they are formidable engines indeed when backed by an instrument like the Convention of Cintra. But politicians (and alas ! it is too much the case with the mass of mankind when the matter does not come home to their own concerns) only look at things in the gross ; the spirit always escapes their notice. Upon this I have insisted with effect, I think, in the pamphlet. But to return to the libel, do not be alarmed, for I assure you I am not. I am confident there is no passage more objectionable than this, and this will be corrected probably if my letter has not arrived too late. "That they had brought upon themselves hatred and contempt is known to the whole nation ; that it was or *ought* to be *unremovable*, I have proved, because it is a fundamental position that no subsequent judicial investigation could affect anything that was *material* in our notions of the offense."

Mary tells me that I ought not to have written to you upon this subject, as it will turn your thoughts from the *Friend*. I should be very sorry to think so humbly of your command over your thoughts upon such an occasion. My reason for writing was merely to know your opinion how far these words were actionable in themselves, and next, how far it is likely, in the present temper of the times, that I should be prosecuted for them. This was all which I proposed to do when I began the subject, and I have dwelt so long upon it merely because my pen chose to move in that track.

I am half in mind to destroy this scrawl, and half in mind to scribble another sheet upon another subject, viz. my published poems, and the arrangement which I mean to place them in, if they are ever republished during my

lifetime. I should begin thus,—“Poems relating to childhood,” and such feelings as rise in the mind in after-life in direct contemplation of that state. To these I should prefix the motto, “The child is father of the man, etc.” The class would begin with the simplest dawn of the affections or faculties, as *Foresight*, or *Children gathering Flowers*, the *Pet Lamb*, etc.; and would ascend in a gradual scale of imagination to *Hartley*, “There was a boy,” and it would conclude with the *Ode*, “There was a time,” which might perhaps be preceded by *We are Seven*, if it were not advisable to place that earlier. (This class would contain *Gathering Flowers*, *Pet Lamb*, *Alice Fell*, *Lucy Gray*, *We are Seven*, *Anecdote for Fathers*, *Rural Architecture*, *Idle Shepherd Boys*, *To H. C. Six Years Old*, *There was a Boy*, *Ode*.) There may be others which I forget. (I am doubtful whether I should place the *Butterfly* and *Sparrow's Nest* here or elsewhere.) The second class would relate to the fraternal affections, to friendship, to love, and to all those emotions which follow after childhood, in youth and early manhood. Here might come the *Sparrow's Nest*, etc., the *Butterflies*, those about *Lucy*, “She was a phantom,” *Louisa*, “Dear child of nature,” “There is a change, and I am poor.” This class to ascend, in a scale of imagination or interest, through “’Tis said that some have died for love,” *Ellen Irwin*, and to conclude with *Ruth* or *The Brothers* printed with a separate title as an adjunct; or this last might be placed elsewhere.

The third class, poems relating to natural objects and their influence on the mind, either as growing or in an advanced state; to begin with the simply human and conclude with the highly imaginative, as *Tintern Abbey*; to be immediately preceded by the *Cuckoo* poems, and

Nutting, after having passed through all stages from objects as they affect a human being from properties with which they are endowed, and as they affect the mind by properties conferred; by the life found in them, or their life given. Here would come (I place them at random) the *Daisies*, the *Celandines*, *The Daffodils*, *The Nightingale and Stockdove*, *The Green Linnet*, *Waterfall and Eglantine*, *Oak and Broom*, *Poor Susan* perhaps, poem on Rydal Island, on *Grasmere*, "I heard a thousand blended notes," "The whirlblast from behind the hill," *The Kitten and the Falling Leaves*, *Fidelity*, those concerning Tom Hutchinson's dog; but with respect to the two or three last, I am not sure that they may not be arranged better elsewhere. The above class would be numerous, and conclude in the manner mentioned above, with *Tintern Abbey*.

Next might come the "Poems on the Naming of Places," as a transition to those relating to human life, which might be connected, harmoniously I may say, by *Poor Susan* (mentioned before but better perhaps placed here), *Beggars*, *Simon Lee*, *The Last of the Flock*, *Goody Blake*, etc.; to ascend, through a regular scale of imagination, to *The Thorn*, *The Highland Girl*, *The Leech-gatherer*, *Hartleap Well*. This class of poems I suppose to consist chiefly of objects most interesting to the mind, not by its personal feelings or a strong appeal to the instincts or natural affections, but to be interesting to a meditative or imaginative mind, either from the moral importance of the pictures, or from the employment they give to the understanding affected through the imagination, and to the higher faculties.

Then might come perhaps those relating to the social and civic duties, chiefly interesting to the imagination through the understanding, and not to the understanding

through the imagination, as the "Political Sonnets," *The Character of the Happy Warrior*, *Rob Roy's Grave*, *Personal Talk*, *Poets' Epitaph*, *Ode to Duty*, *To Burns' Sons*, etc.; then perhaps those relating to maternal feeling, connubial or parental, the maternal to ascend from *The Sailor's Mother* through *The Emigrant Mother*, *Affliction of M—— of ——*, to *The Mad Mother*, to conclude with *The Idiot Boy*.

Finally, the class of poems on old age — *Animal tranquillity and decay*, "Though narrow be that old man's cares, and near," *The Childless Father*, *The Two Thieves*, *The Matron of Jedborough*, those relating to *Matthew*, *The Cumberland Beggar*, to conclude perhaps with *Michael*, which might conclude the whole. *The Blind Highland Boy* ought to take its place among "the Influences of Natural Objects," the sense of sight being wanting to produce an [increase?] of imagination, and to throw the humblest [person] into sublime situations; feeling consecrating form, and form ennobling feeling. This may suffice to give you a notion of my views. The principle of the arrangement is that there should be a scale in each class, and in the whole; and that each poem should be so placed as to direct the reader's attention by its position to its *primary* interest. I am writing illegibly.

Sara is, I think, fully as well as usual.

Most affectionately your friend,

W. WORDSWORTH.

GENERAL INDEX

NOTE. On all names marked with an asterisk, see also the *Index of Correspondents* at pp. 492-498 of this volume. For references to specific poems by Wordsworth, see the *Index of Poems* at pp. 489-491. The initials W. W. and D. W. are used to signify William Wordsworth and Dorothy Wordsworth. The number of the volume referred to is set in heavy-faced type.

- Addison, Joseph, **2**, 211; **3**, 279
 Æschylus, **2**, 466
 Airy, Professor, **2**, 441
 Alfieri, **2**, 51
 *Alford, Henry, praises W. W.'s poetry, **3**, 191
 Alfoxden, **1**, 110, 111
 Allan Bank, **1**, 334, 348, 386, 415, 469
 Allston, Washington, **1**, 534; **3**, 217, 263, 281, 282
 American securities, **2**, 378
 Angerstein, Mr., his pictures, **1**, 172, 348
 Applethwaite (Sir G. Beaumont's gift to W. W.), **1**, 151, 152, 239; **3**, 343
 Ariosto, **1**, 206; **2**, 153; Godwyn's edition of, **1**, 108
 Armstrong, John, **2**, 210
 Arnold, Dr. Thomas, **2**, 444, 500, 502; **3**, 56, 108, 124, 254, 305
 Bacon, Lord, **2**, 89, 463
 Bailey, Peter, his plagiarisms on W. W.'s poems, **1**, 162
 Barbauld, Anna Laetitia, **2**, 428
 Barrow's *Travels in South Africa*, **1**, 294
 Barton, Bernard, **2**, 100; **3**, 396
 Beatty's *Minstrel*, **1**, 53
 Beaumont, Francis, **1**, 187
 Beaumont, Francis (the younger), **1**, 194
 *Beaumont, Sir George, **1**, 157, 315, 498; **2**, 107, 158, 227, 296, 324; his gift of Applethwaite to W. W., **1**, 151; his courtesies to W. W., 166, 172, 189, 193, 259; his paintings, 187, 189, 195, 242, 329, 331, 333, 528; **2**, 219; **3**, 63; W. W.'s affection for, **1**, 189, 212, 256, 259, 523; his improvements at Coleorton, 198, 205, 257; **2**, 139; W. W. dedicates poems to, 48; his son's marriage, 256; death of, 305; **3**, 409
 *Beaumont, Sir George (son of preceding), **2**, 256, 444
 Beaumont, Sir John, **1**, 532
 *Beaumont, Lady (wife of Sir George), **1**, 168, 169, 172, 191, 205, 213, 220, 225, 240, 259, 315, 316; **2**, 107, 227, 256, 305; her winter garden at Coleorton, **1**, 257, 264, 269, 271-285, 288, 299, 538; assists toward Hartley Coleridge's education, **2**, 29; death of, 379
 Beaumont, Lady (mother of Sir George), **1**, 325, 347, 488
 Beaumont, Lady (wife of the younger Sir George), **3**, 29, 34, 36
 Behn, Mrs. Aphra, **3**, 25
 Bell, Dr. Andrew, **2**, 54
 Bentley, Richard, **1**, 151
 Betty, William H. W., **1**, 174, 186
 *Biggs and Cottle, printers, **1**, 123
 Boccaccio, **1**, 209

- Boileau, 1, 107
 Bolton Abbey, 1, 314
 Bonaparte, *see* Napoleon
 Bonaparte, Lucien, 2, 52
 Border Poets, English and Scottish, 2, 210
 Borromean Islands, 1, 13
 Bowles, William Lisle, 3, 319
 Brig, 1, 13
 Brougham, Henry, 2, 77, 112, 113, 259, 338
 Brown, John, 2, 210
 *Browning, Elizabeth Barrett, 3, 169, 336
 Bruce, Michael, 3, 404
 Bruce's *Travels*, 1, 289
 Bryant, William Cullen, 3, 405
 Burns, Robert, 1, 282; 2, 88; his poems, 1, 5; his monument, 3, 401
 Byron, Lord, 2, 32, 83, 104, 109, 168, 211-213, 242, 403, 437; Montagu's edition of, 306
 Calvert, Dr. John, 3, 237
 *Calvert, William, 1, 52, 55, 56, 61; 2, 363; 3, 237, 454
 Calvert, Raisley, offers W. W. a share of his income, 1, 73; his illness, 76, 78, 81, 84; his testamentary provision for W. W., 77, 86, 180; 3, 237
 Campbell, Colonel, 1, 511
 Campbell, Thomas, 1, 471
 Canning, George, 1, 499; 2, 33, 147, 149, 229
 Cargill, Mr., 2, 90
 Chalmers, Dr. Thomas, 2, 102
 Chamouny, 1, 13
 Chantrey, Sir Francis, his bust of W. W., 2, 157, 185, 323; other work, 207
 Channing, William Ellery, 3, 350
 Chatterton, Thomas, 3, 403
 Chaucer, 1, 280; 2, 228
 Chester, Bishop of, 2, 234, 310
 Chiabrera, his epitaphs, 3, 81
 Christian, Mr., 2, 432
 Cintra, the Convention of, 1, 380, 393; W. W.'s pamphlet on, 1, 387, 389, 391, 398-415, 417, 420-424, 427, 435, 440, 443-460, 462, 464, 511; 2, 101
 Clarkson, Thomas, 1, 84, 128, 145, 150, 335, 351, 374, 470; 2, 189; 3, 335
 *Clarkson, Mrs., 1, 128, 145, 166, 375; 2, 9, 160, 225
 Clough, Arthur Hugh, 3, 346
 Coleorton (seat of the Beaumonts), 1, 198, 205; the Wordsworths at, 252, 256 *et seq.*, 264, 266, 269, 321
 *Coleridge, Derwent, his boyhood, 1, 263, 266, 381, 388, 514; 2, 19; early plans for, 53, 107, 118, 127; teaches school, 231; a curate, 299, 389, 415
 Coleridge, Hartley, his boyhood, 1, 126, 263, 266, 270, 299, 381, 388, 514; 2, 19, 24; his university education, 28, 29, 52, 53, 117; his writings, 173, 291, 362, 396, 505; 3, 26, 92, 190; teaches school, 2, 201, 226, 231; his loose habits, 299, 415, 418; 3, 28; his father's death, 58; his unreliability, 192, 255; his last days, 347; his funeral, 346
 *Coleridge, Henry Nelson, 3, 254, 258
 *Coleridge, John Taylor, death of his son, 3, 271
 *Coleridge, Samuel Taylor, described by D. W., 1, 109, 355; his tragedy *Osorio*, 1, 109, 113, 324; 3, 357; Wedgwood's liberality to, 358; visits Germany with W. W. and D. W., 358-362; at Ratzeburg, 1, 119; *Christabel*, 128, 324; his illnesses, 142, 153, 157, 160, 238, 251, 264, 333, 339, 341, 343; 3, 2, 4, 8, 460, 462, 468; D. W. transcribes W. W.'s poems for, 1, 164; 3, 449, 457; journey to Italy, 1, 164, 169; his library at Keswick, 171; Sir G. Beaumont's portrait of, 189; travels in Europe, 189, 196, 218, 225; returns to England, 237, 246; his domestic difficulties, 243, 247-252, 263, 266, 268, 298, 322, 380; his moral weaknesses, 266, 269, 334, 457, 496, 520; 2, 18; his residence at Coleorton, 1, 270, 289; lectures in London, 324, 325, 342, 347, 540;

- The Friend*, 382-384, 389, 395, 412, 432, 436, 452, 457, 460, 467, 471, 476, 477, 479, 486, 489, 490, 492-496; his residence with Thomas Wilkinson, 462; contributes to *The Courier*, 487, 520; 2, 98; goes to London with Montagu, 1, 501; his opinion of Scott's poetry, 509; of Washington Allston, 534; his estrangement from Wordsworth, 1, 540; 2, 3-9; their reconciliation, 9, 12; Hartley's college education, 28, 29; contributions to *Blackwood's*, 162, 166; advertises for pupils, 173; efforts in Mr. Gillman's behalf, 2, 255; visits Netherlands with W. W., 355, 362; life at Highgate, 415, 443; his death, 3, 58; Allston's portrait of, 255, 263; his intimacy with Allston, 281; incidental mention of, 1, 110, 114, 115, 123, 130, 131, 141, 142, 149, 151, 162, 174-176, 181, 184, 186, 187, 198, 217, 235, 258, 301, 309, 311, 332, 348, 356, 377, 387, 417, 455, 518, 538; 2, 24, 107, 118, 127, 201, 208, 212, 231, 350, 425, 470, 498; 3, 228
- *Coleridge, Sara, 1, 381; 2, 53, 85, 117, 201, 219, 230, 237, 255, 371, 415; 3, 325; her marriage, 2, 389
- Coleridge, Sarah (Fricker), 1, 126, 130, 237, 243, 246-251, 263, 266-268, 287, 298, 322-324, 380, 387, 458; 2, 7, 12, 52, 117, 118, 129, 201, 219, 237, 255, 299, 371, 389, 415, 418; her death, 3, 325
- Collins, William, 2, 358, 420; 3, 420
- Como, Lake, 1, 13, 14
- Cookson, Strickland, 2, 159, 161
- Cookson, W. (uncle of W. W.), 1, 6, 8, 19
- Cookson, Mrs. W., 1, 6
- Cookson-Kendall, Mr. and Mrs., 3, 12
- Copyright laws, *see* William Wordsworth, opinions of
- Cornwall, Barry, *see* B. W. Proctor
- Cottle, A. S., 1, 112
- *Cottle, Joseph, 2, 53; his tract on the Church of Rome, 3, 329
- Cottle, Joseph (son of preceding), 2, 361
- Country estates and gardening, W. W.'s opinion on, 1, 198 *et seq.*, 204, 217, 272 *et seq.*, 290 *et seq.*
- Cowper, Dorothy, *see* Mrs. Cookson
- Cowper, William, 1, 289; 3, 220
- Crabbe, George, 1, 376
- *Crackanthorp, Mrs. (aunt of W. W.), 1, 125
- Crump, Mr., 1, 181, 399, 476, 487
- *Cunningham, Allan, 2, 208, 350; his writings, 209; edits selections from W. W.'s poems, 324, 329; his edition of Burns, 3, 72
- Dalrymple, Sir Hew, 1, 380, 393, 445, 451
- Dante, 1, 206; 2, 99, 153, 216
- Darwin, Dr. Erasmus, 2, 419
- Davila, H. C., 1, 108
- Davy, Sir Humphry, 1, 123, 328, 332; 2, 369; corrects proof-sheets of *Lyrical Ballads*, 1, 123; visits Grasmere, 168; 2, 245
- *De Quincey, Thomas, 1, 322, 463; 2, 79, 291; interest in W. W.'s writings, 1, 147, 163; invited to visit W. W., 149, 300, 301, 359, 434; W. W.'s advice on college life, 163; described by D. W., 325; visits Grasmere, 381, 389; assists W. W. in publication of *Cintra* pamphlet, 395, 396, 415, 417, 420, 424, 449, 452, 454; occupies Dove Cottage, 442, 466, 480, 481; his library, 481, his opinion of the *Lady of the Lake*, 508; editor *Westminster Gazette*, 2, 32; his family, 293-295
- Derwentwater, 1, 61
- Description of the Lakes, Wordsworth's, 1, 497
- De Vere, Aubrey, 3, 4
- Devonshire, duke of, 2, 61
- Dewhurst, Mr., a distressed author, 3, 6
- Dora's Field, 2, 232, 275
- Dryden, John, 1, 208-210; his translation of Virgil, 2, 120-123
- Duoma d'Ossola, 1, 13
- Duppa's life of Michael Angelo, 1, 173
- *Dyce, Rev. Alexander; his edition of poets, 2, 358, 392, 419; 3, 1, 5,

- 151, 420; his *Specimens of English Sonnets*, 3, 24, 30
 Dyer, John, 1, 539; 2, 358
- *Edgeworth, Francis Beaufort, his poems, 3, 423
Edinburg Review, 1, 340, 432, 471; 2, 45, 62
 Edridge, Mr., 1, 173
 Edwards, John, the ingenuous poet of Derby, 2, 55
 Elliot, Jane, 3, 25
 Everett, Mrs. Edward, 3, 318
- Faber, F. W., 3, 276, 349
 *Fenwick, Isabella, 3, 197, 273, 320, 321
 Ferguson, General, 1, 410
 Fermor, Mrs., 1, 330
 *Field, Barron, 2, 353; 3, 121, 122, 125, 145, 189
 Field, Edmund, 2, 360
 Fisher, Emmeline, 3, 320
 Fleming, Lady, 1, 437; 2, 201, 276
 *Fletcher, J., his writings, 2, 245, 248-251
 Fornett, 1, 8, 9, 10, 51
 • Fox, Charles James, 1, 135 *et seq.*; 2, 163, 229
 Frederick II of Prussia, Thiebault's anecdotes of, 1, 294
Freeholders of Westmoreland, To the, W. W.'s pamphlet, 2, 112, 115
 French people, W. W.'s impressions of, 1, 17
 French Revolution (of 1789), 1, 17, 44, 75; 2, 60, 162; (of 1830), 2, 424, 442; 3, 409
Friend, The, Coleridge's weekly essay, 1, 382-384, 389, 395, 412, 432, 436, 452, 457, 460, 467, 471, 476, 477, 479, 486, 489, 490, 492-496
 Friere, General Bernardine de, 1, 451
 Furness Abbey, 2, 102
- Gardening, *see* Country Estates
 Gaskell, Mrs., 3, 348
 Gee, Mr. and Mrs., 2, 151, 156, 172, 309, 319
 Geneva, 1, 12
 Genlis, Mme. de, 2, 263
- George III, 1, 46, 501
 *Gillies, R. P., his poetry, 2, 36, 38, 39, 94, 108
 Gilpin, Bernard, 2, 207
 Gladstone, William Ewart, his aid in copyright legislation, 3, 159, 167; assists in obtaining pension for W. W., 246-248, 250; his *State of the Church*, 294
 *Godwin, Catherine Grace, her writings, 2, 402-404
 *Godwin, William, 1, 514
 *Gomm, Sir William M., his experiences in Brazil, 3, 260
 Graham's *Bards of Scotland*, 1, 284
 Grahame, Robert, 1, 382
 Grand Chartreuse, 1, 12; 2, 193
 Grasmere, 1, 145, 154
 Gray, Thomas, 2, 80, 154, 176, 314
 Green, George and Sarah, their tragic death, 1, 344, 482; provision for their orphans, 346, 350, 354-356, 359; 3, 465
 Green, Mr., of Ambleside, 1, 331
 Greenwood, Robert H., 1, 33
 Grote, epigrammatic sonnet on, 3, 175
- Hamburg, W. W.'s impressions of, 1, 117
 *Hamilton, Sir William Rowan, his writings, 2, 312, 313, 382, 397; 3, 4; entertains W. W. at Dublin, 2, 386; invited to Rydal Mount, 434; his marriage, 3, 3, 7; godfather to Wordsworth's grandson, 96
 *Hamilton, Miss, 2, 314, 382, 398; 3, 7
 Hancock, Robert, his portraits, 3, 113
 Handley, Edwin Hill, his writings, 2, 437
 Hare, Augustus, 2, 216
 Hare, Julius Charles, 2, 216, 500
 Harrison, Anthony, 1, 128; 2, 8, 46
 Havell (artist), 1, 331, 348
 *Haydon, Benjamin Robert, 2, 63, 77, 257; his lectures at Oxford, 3, 195; his portrait of W. W., 3, 331, 333
 Hayward, Abraham, 2, 354

- Hazlitt, William, **1**, 189; **2**, 62, 437
 Helvellyn, **2**, 105, 327, 328, 500
 *Hemans, Mrs. Felicia, W.W.'s interest in, **2**, 507; **3**, 7; dedicates poems to W.W., **3**, 44, 59; her letters, 114
 Heraud, John Abraham, his verse, **2**, 439
 Heywood, Thomas, **1**, 370
 Hogarth, William, **2**, 211
 Holcroft, Thomas, **1**, 306
 Holmes, Colonel, **2**, 155
 Horace, **1**, 107
 Houbraken, **1**, 193
 Howitt, William and Mary, **2**, 454; **3**, 225
 Howley, Dr. William, **3**, 29
 Hunt, Leigh, **2**, 245; **3**, 218
 Hurst and Robinson, **2**, 265, 273, 281, 289
 Hutchinson, the life of Colonel, **1**, 294
 Hutchinson, George, **1**, 470
 Hutchinson, Joanna, **2**, 282; **3**, 12, 434
 Hutchinson, Margaret, **1**, 100
 Hutchinson, Mary, *see* Mary Wordsworth
 Hutchinson, Sarah, **1**, 219, 258, 262, 323, 343, 348, 374, 398, 430, 433, 441, 447, 464, 473, 479, 491-493, 495; **2**, 3, 37, 133, 173, 183, 189, 202, 263, 310, 415; her death, **3**, 76-78
 Hutchinson, Thomas, **2**, 224; recommended as a land agent, 177
 Hutchinsons of Sockburn, the, **1**, 40, 127
 Inman's portrait of W.W., **3**, 312, 324
 Irving, Edward, **2**, 210
 Isle of Man, travel directions for, **3**, 12
 Italian people, W.W.'s impressions of the, **1**, 17
 Jeffrey, Francis, **1**, 432, 471; **2**, 45
 Jewsbury, Maria Jane, **2**, 264, 272, 281, 508
 Johnson, Dr. Samuel, **2**, 123, 127, 246
 Jones, Robert, **1**, 23, 34, 43, 79; **2**, 218, 221, 466; visited by W.W., **1**, 25; his pedestrian tour with W.W., 27; visits W.W., **2**, 452
 Juvenal, **1**, 107; an imitation of, **1**, 87
 Kelsall, Mrs., **1**, 418
 Kelsall, Thomas Forbes, **3**, 22
 *Kenyon, John, **2**, 165; **3**, 18, 146; his criticisms on W.W.'s poems, 109, 110
 Keswick, the scenery at, **1**, 60, 61
 Klopstock, W.W.'s impressions of, **1**, 118, 419
 Lake Country, W.W.'s guide to, **1**, 497; **2**, 176; travel directions for, **2**, 91, 92; changes of proprietorship in, **3**, 19
 *Lamb, Charles, **1**, 184, 463, 501; **2**, 3, 5, 44, 160, 170, 232, 252, 262, 269, 271, 299, 304, 405, 415, 419; **3**, 11; his death, 65; his literary remains, 80, 113; his epitaphs, 80, 81, 83, 86
 Lamb, John, **2**, 160
 Lamb, Mary, **1**, 184, 218, 462, 501; **2**, 6, 166, 269, 271, 415
 Landor, Walter Savage, his writings, **2**, 152-154, 179, 235; **3**, 128; his criticism of *Laodamia*, **2**, 214; meets W.W., 498-500; incidental mention of, **3**, 101, 271
 Landscape gardening, *see* Country Estates
 Le Grice, Charles Valentine, **1**, 311; **3**, 227
 Lewis, Matthew G. ("Monk"), *The Castle Spectre*, **1**, 114
 Leyden, John, **2**, 210
 Lindsay, Lady A., **3**, 25
 Lloyd, Miss (Christopher Wordsworth's fiancée), **1**, 125
 London University, **2**, 259
 Longman, Thomas Norton, his publishing relations with W.W., **1**, 335, 432; **2**, 182, 246, 260, 266, 268, 286, 301, 302, 429; **3**, 55; his relations with Coleridge, **2**, 5
 Lonsdale, (First) Earl of, **1**, 21; his debt to the Wordsworth estate, **1**, 2, 29, 180
 *Lonsdale, (Second) Earl of, pays his father's debt to the Wordsworths, **1**,

- 180; his generosity to W. W., 233, 238; **2**, 13; W. W. solicits his influence, **2**, 11; procures office for W. W., **30**; W. W.'s appreciation of, 125; **3**, 355; his pictures, **2**, 499; endows church at Cockermouth, **3**, 93; his death, 298
- Lonsdale, Lady, death of, **3**, 158
- *Losh, James, **1**, 128
- Lowther, Lord Lonsdale's estate, **1**, 203
- Luff, Mr., of Patterdale, **2**, 62
- Luff, Mrs., **2**, 218, 219
- Lyrical Ballads*, **1**, 121, 122; **3**, 121, 361-365, 435, 439, 449; second volume of, **1**, 123, 126, 129, 130, 179, 180
- Macaulay, Thomas Babington, **3**, 276, 279
- Machiavelli, **2**, 89
- Mackintosh, Sir James, **1**, 378
- Madras System, the, **2**, 54, 339, 342
- Marshall, Mrs., *see* Jane Pollard
- Martigny, **1**, 12, 13
- Martineau, Harriet, **3**, 328
- Martineau, Mr. and Mrs. (parents of Dr. James M.), **1**, 20
- *Mathews, William, **1**, 24; W. W.'s interest in, 26, 30, 33, 34, 37, 42, 57, 65; his difficulties, 32-36, 42; suggestions of literary coöperation with W. W., 42, 65, 71-76, 77; in Portugal, 59; his newspaper connection, 78, 84
- Michael Angelo, his sonnets, **1**, 197, 206, 262
- Mickle, William J., **2**, 210
- Milton, John, **2**, 89, 119, 153, 228, 470
- *Monkhouse, Thomas, **1**, 491, 492; **2**, 99, 160, 166, 181, 195, 203, 224, 236, 239, 252, 274
- *Montagu, Basil, **1**, 310, 319, 353; pupil of W. W., **1**, 85, 90, 100, 103, 116; his education, 104; bungsles in subscription for Green orphans, 359 *et seq.*; takes Coleridge to London, 501; his share in Coleridge's estrangement from W. W., **2**, 3-6; his literary work, 306, 408, 479
- Montagu, Lady Mary Wortley, **2**, 422
- Montagu, Mr. (father of Basil M.), **1**, 90, 92, 99, 105
- *Montgomery, James, **2**, 56, 217
- Moore, Sir John, **1**, 393, 400-404, 423, 444, 446, 451
- Moore, Thomas, **2**, 104
- *Moultrie, John, **2**, 146
- *Moxon, Edward, his verse, **2**, 296; his publishing relations with W. W., **3**, 55, 59, 156, 172, 215, 222, 232, 238, 252, 255, 259, 287, 312, 315, 326
- Murray, John, **2**, 246, 264, 286, 302
- Myers, John, **1**, 58, 79, 108
- Myers, Tom (cousin of W. W.), **1**, 85; **2**, 137
- Nab Scar, disputed rights on, **1**, 437
- Napoleon, **1**, 399, 407; **2**, 20, 27, 60, 69, 70, 77, 163, 448; **3**, 408
- Nether Stowey, **1**, 110
- Newcastle, Duchess of, **2**, 421; **3**, 25
- "North, Christopher," *see* John Wilson
- North, Mr., of Liverpool, **1**, 437; **2**, 17
- O'Connell, Daniel, **2**, 297; **3**, 95, 177
- Orinda (Mrs. Phillips), **3**, 25
- Orléans, W. W.'s life at, **1**, 42
- Owen, Robert, **2**, 414
- Parry, Ellen, **3**, 203
- Pascal, Blaise, **1**, 265
- *Pearson, William, **2**, 267, 328, 434
- Peele, George, **2**, 392
- Perry, James, **1**, 83
- Petrarch, **2**, 153
- Philanthropist, The*, a proposed Miscellany, **1**, 71
- Pickersgill's portrait of W. W., **2**, 501, 503
- Pindar, Peter, **1**, 107
- Pinney, Azor, **1**, 106
- *Pollard, Jane (afterwards Mrs. Marshall), friend of D. W., **1**, 1
- *Poole, Thomas, **1**, 115, 116; contributes toward Hartley Coleridge's education, **2**, 29, 52
- Pope, Alexander, **1**, 107; **2**, 211, 359, 428; **3**, 277, 278
- Powell, Mr., **3**, 193

- Price, Sir Uvedale, **3**, 156
 Proctor, Bryan Waller ("Barry Cornwall"), **2**, 142, 145, 185
- *Quillinan, Edward (husband of Dora W.), **2**, 172, 179, 266, 310, 323, 411, 452; **3**, 125; his verse, **2**, 396; **3**, 235, 312
 Quillinan, Jemima (daughter of E. Q.), **2**, 160, 452, 459; **3**, 64
 Quillinan, Mrs. (first wife of E. Q.), **2**, 160, 232
 Quillinan Mrs. Edward, *see* Dora Wordsworth
 Quillinan, Rotha (daughter of E. Q.), **2**, 155, 231, 452, 459; **3**, 64, 226
- Racedown Cottage, **1**, 89, 90-92
 Racine, **2**, 51
 Reding, Aloys, stone to her memory, **2**, 202
 Regnier, General, **1**, 424
 Reynolds, Sir Joshua, **1**, 167, 170, 172
 Riou, Lieutenant Commander, **1**, 27
 *Robinson, Henry, **1**, 336
 *Robinson, Henry Crabb, **1**, 500; **2**, 157; introduced to Scott by W. W., 151; his travels, 192, 261, 271, 291, 297, 331, 333, 372; **3**, 104, 106, 112
 *Rogers, Samuel, **2**, 213; **3**, 261, 319; assists Green orphans, **1**, 375; his poems, **2**, 31; helps D. W. secure a publisher, 187, 189, 199
 *Rose, Hugh James, **2**, 480
 Rough, William, **2**, 170
 Rydal Mount, **2**, 16, 21, 127
- Saragossa, the siege of, **1**, 399, 401, 406, 408, 411, 439, 441
 Schlegel, **2**, 216
 Scipio Africanus, **2**, 88
 Scotland, W. W.'s visits to, **1**, 149, 160; **2**, 185, 369, 451, 454, 457, 458, 462, 465, 467-469, 473; **3**, 16, 20, 26, 52, 378, 379; D. W.'s impressions of, **1**, 314
 *Scott, John, his writings, **2**, 69, 75; his death, 144
 *Scott, Sir Walter, **2**, 32, 210; invited to Grasmere, **1**, 107; W. W.'s visits to, 149, 160; **2**, 458, 467-469; **3**, 16, 378, 379; visits Grasmere, **1**, 207; W. W.'s suggestions for his *Dryden*, 208-210; his poetry, 182, 369, 508, 514; **3**, 23; his novels, **2**, 57, 58, 432; his failing health, 451, 454; his death, 502
 Seward, Anna, **2**, 428
 Shakespeare, **2**, 228, 470
 *Sharp, Richard ("Conversation Sharp"), **1**, 355, 375; **2**, 99, 187, 363; his writings, 175, 176; his death, **3**, 75
 Shirley, James, **3**, 5
 Skelton, John, **2**, 211; **3**, 1, 14
 Skiddaw, **1**, 61
 Smith, Charlotte, **2**, 428; **3**, 25
 Smith, Elizabeth, **1**, 419
 Smith, John Thomas, **2**, 371
 Smith, Patty, **2**, 40
 Smith, William, **2**, 98, 99, 103
 Southey, Cuthbert, **2**, 237, 362; **3**, 262
 Southey, Edith, **2**, 86, 117, 295; **3**, 35, 67
 Southey, Kate, **3**, 257, 262, 320, 342
 *Southey, Robert, **1**, 166, 176, 318, 448, 470, 473; **2**, 24, 32, 53, 87, 208, 216, 219, 230, 237, 242, 246, 362, 415, 507; **3**, 8, 15, 36, 177, 261; his writings, **1**, 89, 106, 141, 143, 147, 191, 194, 508, 511; **2**, 365; **3**, 408, 428; W. W.'s opinion of, **1**, 106, 153; death of his son Herbert, **2**, 83; William Smith's attack on, 98, 103; his method of work, 147; his failing health, **3**, 253, 256; his death, 257, 258; his funeral, 262; his literary remains, 264, 275, 350; his monument, 272, 300; his epitaph, 285
 Speddings of Armathwaite, **1**, 62, 64
 Spenser, **2**, 228; **3**, 377
 Stephens orphans, the, of Sedbergh, **2**, 129
 *Stuart, Daniel, **1**, 393, 440, 443, 456
 Swiss Alps, W. W.'s impressions of, **1**, 16; **2**, 307
 Swiss people, **1**, 16
 Sydney, Sir Philip, **2**, 89
 Sympson, Rev. Joseph, **1**, 127
- *Talfourd, Thomas Noon, **2**, 146; **3**, 245; his copyright bill, 99

- Taylor, William, of Norwich, 1, 517
 Tegg, 3, 234
 Tennyson, Alfred, 2, 241; 3, 319
 Terrot, William, 1, 26, 31, 32, 37, 44, 58
 Thelwall, Mr., 3, 170
 Thomson, James, 1, 273, 529; 2, 210, 359, 393
 Tickell, Thomas, 2, 211, 428; 3, 14
 Tillbrook, Samuel, 2, 11, 165, 311, 453, 456
 Tobin, James, 1, 114
 Tooke, Horne, W. W.'s opinion of, 81
 Ullswater, 2, 105
 Valais, 1, 13
 Vaughan, Richard Charles, 1, 411
 Villeneuve, 1, 12
 Virgil, 1, 286, 410; 2, 119-124, 230; W. W.'s translations of, 119-124, 229, 308
 Voltaire, 2, 467
 Walton's *Angler*, 1, 337
 Warren, John (Bishop of St. David's), 1, 43
 Warter, Mr. (husband of Edith Southey), 3, 35, 36
 *Watts, Alaric, 2, 227, 268, 270, 272, 282, 349, 356; 3, 10; assists W. W. in negotiation with publishers, 2, 264-266, 279, 286-289
 Way, B. L. and Lewis, 3, 313
 Webster, Daniel, 3, 283
 Weir, Miss, 1, 470
 Wellington, Duke of, 1, 440, 444; 2, 61, 69, 73; 3, 211
 Whitby, 1, 171
 Whittaker's *History of Craven*, 1, 315
 Wilberforce, William, 1, 9, 84; 2, 108
 Wilkie, Sir David, 1, 329, 536
 Wilkins's portrait of W. W., 2, 450
 Wilkinson, Joseph, 1, 479, 506
 Wilkinson, Thomas, 1, 202, 233, 240; 2, 453; his journal, 1, 320; his spade, 321
 Williams, Helen Maria, 2, 428; 3, 25
 Wilson, John ("Christopher North"), 1, 346, 400, 433, 465, 472, 477, 492, 505; 2, 51, 81; 3, 279; described by D. W., 1, 368, 485, 486; visited by the Wordsworths, 503; a testimonial by W. W., 2, 131; his writings, 364; his hospitality, 436; W. W. discusses his poetry with, 3, 435-443
 Winchelsea, Countess of, her poems, 2, 392, 420, 422-424, 426-428; 3, 14, 25
 Windy Brow, 1, 60, 61
 Wordsworth, Anne Cookson (mother of W. W.), 3, 43
 Wordsworth, Catherine (daughter of W. W.), her infancy, 1, 442, 453, 463, 471, 473, 481, 491, 497, 502; her death, 2, 9, 27
 Wordsworth, Charles (nephew of W. W., son of Master of Trinity), 2, 140, 310, 324, 451, 457, 458, 475
 Wordsworth, Christopher (uncle of W. W.), offends Lord Lonsdale, 1, 2; his ill-nature, 3; his debt to the Wordsworth children, 21
 *Wordsworth, Christopher (brother of W. W., Master of Trinity College, Cambridge), his youthful characteristics, 1, 1, 3, 11, 28, 48, 79; early studies, 28; college prizes, 79; engagement, 125; Vice-Chancellor at Cambridge, 2, 301; Master of Trinity, 416; his health at sixty-seven, 3, 231; incidental mention of, 1, 7, 9, 18, 21, 23, 24, 36, 53, 56, 85, 301, 490, 494; 2, 182, 203, 216, 319, 474; 3, 43, 332
 Wordsworth, Christopher (nephew of W. W., son of Master of Trinity), 2, 140, 310, 373, 416, 475; 3, 35
 *Wordsworth, Dora (Mrs. Edward Quillinan, daughter of W. W.), her infancy and childhood, 1, 169, 220, 224, 225, 229, 287, 438, 453, 471, 481, 491, 502; 2, 78; travels with her parents, 203, 218, 220, 224, 225, 237, 355, 381, 440, 451, 458, 464; her unknown suitor, 278; her delicate health, 294, 298, 303, 309, 434; 3, 87, 320; engaged to Edward Quillinan, 2,

- 321, 322; bridesmaid for Sara Coleridge, 389; bridesmaid for Edith Southey, **3**, 35; her studies, 61; her album, 116; her death, 341; incidental reference to, **2**, 310, 371, 408, 412, 453
- *Wordsworth, Dorothy (sister of W. W.), describes her brothers, **1**, 1, 3, 11, 28; grief at her parents' death, **2**; her inheritance, **2**, 21; separated from her brothers, **3**, 5; her books and reading, **3**, 294, 337, 419; her friendship for Jane Pol-lard, **5**; her grandmother, **6**, 21; her life at Fornett, 8-10, 23, 24, 51; her scholars, **9**; her account of W. W.'s travels, **20**; plans a school of industry, **22**; visits the Hutchinsons, **40**; transcribes W. W.'s poems, **41**, 164; **3**, 449, 457; visits London, **1**, 46; sees royal family at Windsor, **46**; a visit from W. W. and Christopher, **48**; plans to live with W. W., **49**, 51, 54, 85; comments on W. W.'s poems, **41**, 50, 338, 343; **2**, 47, 94; W. W.'s affection for, **1**, 53, 54; **2**, 370; **3**, 10; her love for walk-ing, **1**, 55, 60, 63, 103; **2**, 150; **3**, 401; with W. W. at Windy Brow, **1**, 59, 60-64; her share in Calvert's legacy, **86**; pupils at Racedown, **86**; studies Italian, 100, 108; her opinions of Coleridge, **109**; de-scribes Nether Stowey, **110**; resi-dence at Alfoxden, **110**; travels in Germany, **119**, **120**; **3**, 358, 365-367; settles at Grasmere, **1**, 124; visits Scotland, **149**; **2**, 191; death of her brother John, **1**, 181, 183, 184, 192, 211; **3**, 392-395; her *Journal of a Tour in Scotland*, **1**, 213, 270, 341; **2**, 187, 199, 200, 327; **3**, 146; plans for Beaumonts visit to Grasmere, **1**, 221, 223, 228; plans for residence at Coleorton, **235**, 244; describes Dove Cottage, **245**; anxiety over Coleridge's diffi-culties, 247-252, 263; her life at Coleorton, 260 *et seq.*, 269, 288, 293-297; visits Bolton Abbey, **312**; impressions of Scotland, **314**; at Allan Bank, 334, 386, 415, 469 *et seq.*, 502, 507; at Cambridge, 371-375; her friendship with Crabb Robinson, **1**, 500; **3**, 402; visits John Wilson at Elleray, **1**, 503; occupies parsonage house at Gras-mere, 519; her resentment at Coleridge's estrangement from W. W., **2**, 5-8; death of Catherine Wordsworth, **9**, 20, 27; forgives Coleridge, **12**, 18; death of Thomas Wordsworth, 15-20; removal to Rydal Mount, **16**, **21**; memories of Thomas, **22**, **26**; journey with W. W., 65, 66; W. W.'s address to Freeholders of Westmoreland, **112**; travels on Continent, 134-136, 273; her *Journal* of Conti-nental tour, 144, 166, 169, 174, 282; plans a visit to Italy, 261-263; visits Miss Jewsbury, 281; at Coleorton with John Wordsworth, 353; her serious illnesses, 370, 375; **3**, 76; invalid days, **2**, 413, 445, 485, 497, 500; **3**, 2, 8, 34, 38, 47, 57, 61; her pet robin, 90; first outing after illness, 103; incidental mention of, **1**, 149, 156; **2**, 37, 141, 143, 166, 197, 284, 310, 380, 395, 505; **3**, 56
- Wordsworth, Gordon (grandson of W. W.), **1**, 392
- Wordsworth, John (brother of W. W.), his youthful characteristics, **1**, 1, 3; goes to Barbadoes, **5**; sails for India, **9**; goes to Jamaica, **10**; visits W. W. at Grasmere, **125**; his last letter to W. W., **177**; his indebtedness to W. W. and D. W., **180**; his death by ship-wreck, 181, 185; **3**, 382, 384-392; D. W.'s memories of, **1**, 211; **3**, 392-395; incidental mention of, **1**, 7, 21, 23, 29, 36, 41, 53, 56, 127, 140
- Wordsworth, John (son of W. W.), his infancy and childhood, **1**, 156, 225, 230, 244, 261, 289, 353, 390, 396, 397, 416, 429, 442, 446, 453, 463, 466, 471, 477, 491, 502; **2**, 10, 78; **3**, 461; his college life, **2**, 206, 216, 261, 298, 304; **3**, 432; choice of

- profession, **2**, 234, 305, 310; curate at Coleorton, 333; rector at Moresby, 353, 412, 474; at Whitwick, 355; his marriage, 393, 449; builds parsonage near Cockermouth, **3**, 18, 29; his family, 331; incidental mention of, **2**, 319, 323, 374; **3**, 155
- * Wordsworth, John (nephew of W. W., son of Richard W.), **3**, 43, 332
- Wordsworth, John (nephew of W. W., son of Master of Trinity), **2**, 301, 310; **3**, 173; visits Rydal, **2**, 460, 474; his death, **3**, 18
- * Wordsworth, Mary Hutchinson (wife of W. W.), **1**, 100, 105, 125, 141, 145, 169, 219, 236, 299, 315, 328, 338, 380, 389, 442, 487, 497, 505; **2**, 27, 39, 103, 144, 151, 174, 220, 237, 243, 269, 285, 355, 371, 412, 455; **3**, 115, 127, 198, 309, 434, 446, 457, 458; a legacy to, **2**, 363; her illness at Nottingham, **3**, 225, 288; her opinion of Inman's portrait of W. W., 310; her closing days, 353
- Wordsworth, Richard (eldest brother of W. W.), **1**, 9, 18, 21, 23, 53, 56; **2**, 97; **3**, 43; his nature, **1**, 1; financial settlements with W. W., **2**, 59, 65; his death and estate, 86
- Wordsworth, Thomas (son of W. W.), birth of, **1**, 222; his name, 224; his childhood, 287, 412, 418, 442, 471, 491, 502; his death, **2**, 15-20; memories of, 22-26
- Wordsworth, William, his boyish characteristics, **1**, 1, 3; his inheritance, **2**, 21, 180; his college plans, **2**, 3; visits Cambridge, 4, 7; early plans, 11; travels in Swiss Alps, 11-19; at Orléans, 21, 37, 42; pedestrian tour of Wales, 23, 25; remissness in correspondence, 24, 42, 149, 155, 159, 166; **2**, 67, 128; in London, **1**, 25, 349; unfamiliarity with modern literature, 31; meditates taking orders, 33, 43; D. W. describes his character, 48, 53; his tour in west of England, 52, 56, 57; affection for D. W., 53, 54; **2**, 370; **3**, 10; with D. W. at Windy Brow, **1**, 59; discusses journalism with William Mathews, 65, 71-76, 77, 82; his frugality, 78, 80, 239; legacy from Raisley Calvert, 86; **3**, 237; his pupils at Racedown Cottage, **1**, 87; collaborates with Francis Wrangham upon an imitation of Juvenal, 87, 93-98, 102; writes satire, 107; his books, 107, 468, 521; **2**, 125, 128, 214; publishing relations with Joseph Cottle, **3**, 356, 357, 360-364; submits *The Borderers* to Covent Garden, **1**, 112; its rejection, 113; his aversion to publishing, 114, 121; leaves Alfoxden, 114; begins work on *The Recluse*, 115; his travels in Germany, 117, 118; **3**, 358; visits Klopstock, **1**, 118; resents Southey's review of *Lyrical Ballads*, 122; travels in Lake District, **3**, 368; his marriage, 376; settles at Grasmere, **1**, 124; **3**, 369-373, 445-453; prepares second edition of *Lyrical Ballads*, **1**, 128-135; advice on books to his brother John, **3**, 377; his admiration of Fox, **1**, 135 *et seq.*; solicits aid for Coleridge, 149; visits the Hutchinsons, 141; visits Scotland with Coleridge and D. W., 149, 160; volunteers against possible French invasion, 150; gratitude to Sir G. Beaumont for Applethwaite, 151; friendship with De Quincey, 147, 149, 159, 163; indignation at Peter Bailey's plagiarisms, 162; birth of Dora W., 169; his orchard hut, 174; a letter from his brother John, 177; pecuniary returns from his poems, 180; **2**, 1, 12, 93; **3**, 20; first visit to Scott, **3**, 378, 379; death of his brother John, **1**, 185; **3**, 382, 384-392; affection for Sir G. Beaumont, **1**, 189, 212, 256, 259; discusses principles of gardening, 198 *et seq.*; Scott visits Grasmere, 207; suggestions for Scott's *Dryden*, 208-210; Lord Lowther's generosity, 233, 238-240; spends winter at Coleorton, 252, 264, 266, 269, 321; objections to satire, 253; enjoyment of Coleorton, 256 *et seq.*,

528; 2, 48; visits to Coleorton, 1, 497; 2, 269; lays out winter garden at Coleorton, 1, 271-285, 290-293, 299; explains principles of his poetry, 301-310; *Critical Review* attacks his poetry, 317; journey to Penrith, 326; called to London by Coleridge's illness, 342, 347, 353; raises fund for Green orphans, 350, 352, 355, 359, 375, 377; 3, 465; helps initiate Coleridge's *The Friend*, 1, 382-384; *The Convention of Cintra* (pamphlet), 385, 387, 393, 398-415, 427, 435, 440, 443-460; 3, 395, 469-471; fears prosecution for pamphlet, 1, 435, 440, 443; contributions to *The Friend*, 489, 490, 493, 494; his *Guide to the Lakes*, 497; 2, 176; occupies parsonage at Grasmere, 1, 499, 519; visits John Wilson at Elleray, 503-506; writes introduction to Wilkinson's *Select Views*, 506; at Bootle, 522, 529-531; *Inscriptions* for Coleorton, 531, 534, 537; 2, 95; estrangement from Coleridge, 1, 540; 2, 3-9; desires an office, 2, 11; death of his daughter Catherine, 9, 20; death of his son Thomas, 13, 14, 20; accepts an annuity from Lord Lonsdale, 13; removal to Rydal Mount, 16, 21; appointed Distributor of Stamps, 20; assists toward Hartley Coleridge's college education, 28, 29; his family, 30, 69; dedicates *Poems* to Sir G. Beaumont, 48; preparing new edition, 55, 57; financial settlements with his brother Richard, 59, 65; trustee of Richard's estate, 86; Commissioner of the Peace, 118; translations of Virgil, 119-124, 229, 308, 494; investments in French funds, 130, 188, 191, 196, 370; a testimonial for John Wilson, 131; travels in Switzerland and Italy, 134; 3, 406; his method of work, 2, 147; aversion to contributing to periodicals, 167, 325, 326, 450; contributes poems to D. W.'s *Journals*, 169 171; his

failing eyesight, 184, 435, 475; 3, 316, 318; a narrow escape, 2, 185; a trip to Scotland, 185, 369; a parody, 189; visits the Low Countries, 205; volumes of *Selections*, 209, 324, 446, 478; revisits Wales, 218, 220-224, 226, 237, 240-242; purchases "Dora's Field," 232; visits Cambridge, 239; collected edition of *Poems*, 247, 253, 260, 273, 276, 281, 285-290, 299, 301, 302, 305; declines a proposal for Dora's hand, 278; travel directions for Wales, 291, 292; contributions to *The Keepsake*, 319, 349, 356; assents to Dora's engagement to Edward Quillinan, 321; visits the Rhine and the Netherlands with Coleridge and Dora, 355; his investments, 363, 370, 377; decrease of his salary, 365; a tour in Ireland, 381, 384-392, 401; difficulty with an "annual," 383; activity at sixty, 413, 417; at Cambridge, 440; portrait for St. John's College, 447; last visit to Scott, 451, 454, 457, 458, 462, 465, 467-469, 473; 3, 16; summer festivities at Rydal Mount, 2, 455; in distinguished company, 482; travel instructions for the Continent, 509; travel directions for Isle of Man, 3, 12; travels in Isle of Man and Burns's country, 20, 26, 52; an epigram to revolutionists, 27; Mrs. Hemans dedicates poems to, 44, 59; visits his son John, 45; declines Edward Moxon's offer to publish, 55; death of Coleridge, 57; reclaims a picture by Sir G. Beaumont, 63; death of Sara Hutchinson, 76-78; selects letters of Lamb for publication, 80; his epitaph for Lamb, 80, 81, 83, 116, 149; his alterations and corrections, 89; a squib on General Evans, 100; advice to Landor, 101; efforts in behalf of Cockermouth church, 98, 102, 111, 431; plans trip to Rome with Crabb Robinson, 105, 107, 125, 126; an inscription for James Montgomery, 117;

his publishing relations with Moxon, 118, 120, 156, 172, 215, 222, 232, 238, 241-243, 252, 255, 259, 287, 312, 315, 326, 328; pencil notes in Barron Field's *Memoirs*, 121, 122; travel notes of his journey to Rome, 129-132; impressions of Rome, 132-136; in Germany, 137; returns to England, 139; Henry Reed's edition of his poems, 139; publishes *Sonnets* in separate volume, 157; his contributions to newspapers, 165; academic honors, 171, 184, 334; an epigram on Grote, 175; death of his nephew, John, 187, 188; objects to publication of Barron Field's *Memoirs*, 188-190; Henry Alford praises his poetry, 191; denies ever seeking a pension, 194; his seventieth birthday, 197; Queen Adelaide visits Rydal, 204; Haydon's etching, 205; his respect for Wellington, 211; thrown from his carriage, 213; portraits by Haydon and Pickersgill, 218; at Bath, 224; "farewell visits for life," 230; his seventy-second birthday, 243; correspondence with Gladstone regarding pension, 246-248, 250; death of Southey, 257, 258; acquaintance with Washington Allston, 263, 283; declines the laureateship, 266, 267; advice to a young author, 268; accepts laureateship, 269, 270; Landor's attack, 271; Southey's epitaph, 285, 289; a godfather by proxy, 290; death of Lord Lonsdale, 298; his seventy-fifth birthday, 300, 302; deaths of his associates, 307; a sight of the queen, 309; attends the queen's ball, 313, 318; a new edition of *Poems*, 321, 323; a visit to York and Leeds, 323; his first meeting with Coleridge and Southey, 327; defeated for Lord Rector of Glasgow University, 337, 338; death of Dora Wordsworth, 341; his resignation, 347; his last illness, 352; incidental mention of,

1, 9, 21, 23, 36, 47, 52, 61, 100, 105, 109, 110, 126, 128, 145, 219, 227, 229, 236, 244, 249-252, 260, 262, 265, 267, 288, 294, 315, 316, 332, 335, 338, 357, 389, 397, 415, 420, 431-433, 447, 465, 471, 473, 479, 486, 500, 504, 507, 511, 521, 522; 2, 10, 16, 97, 107, 140, 160, 161, 167, 170, 183, 193, 197, 200, 202, 271, 284, 309, 327, 408, 425; 3, 36, 56, 85, 89, 114

HIS OPINIONS:

on political questions and principles, 1, 66, 68-70, 78, 82, 414, 415, 478; 2, 20, 25, 32, 33, 101, 110, 111, 113, 115, 162-164, 215, 476, 479, 497, 506; 3, 316 (*see also below*: Convention of Cintra, Catholic Question, Parliamentary Reform, Opposition, Social Conditions, Liberty of Press, French Revolution, Public Affairs, Poor Laws); on the French Revolution (of 1789), 1, 17, 44, 75; 2, 60, 162; (of 1830), 2, 424, 442; 3, 409; on poetry (in general), 1, 303 *et seq.*; 2, 38, 145, 215, 397, 438, 439, 470; on versification, 2, 119-122; on epic poetry, 3, 400; on his own poetry, 1, 136-139, 301-310, 330, 357; 2, 40-42, 44, 54, 68, 74-76, 79, 208, 228, 243, 284, 430; 3, 33, 109, 123, 184, 191, 303, 411, 420, 435, 443, 472, 474 (for references to single poems, *see* separate Index of Poems, p. 489); on reviewers, 1, 318; 3, 74, 242, 243; on periodical miscellanies, 1, 67; on University life and education, 1, 161; 2, 114; on solitude, 1, 170; on actors and acting, 1, 87, 174, 186; on country estates and gardening, 1, 198, *et seq.*, 204, 272 *et seq.*, 290 *et seq.*; 3, 214; on satire, 1, 253; on religious instruction for working classes, 1, 361-365; on national education, 1, 365-367; on topographical histories, 1, 377, 428; on copyright legislation, 1, 379; 2, 23, 431; 3, 123, 145, 154, 159-164, 167, 178, 181, 221, 234, 249;

- on the Convention of Cintra and Spanish affairs, **1**, 380, 385, 393, 398-415, 422-424, 443-460, 512; **2**, 71, 73; on the Catholic Question, **1**, 385, 428, 518; **2**, 20, 32, 147, 149, 164, 258, 335-337; **3**, 426, 428; on freedom of discussion, **1**, 425; on military defenses and establishments, **1**, 425; **2**, 84, 88; on Parliamentary reform and the Reform Bill, **1**, 448; **2**, 116, 163, 314-317, 465, 471, 477, 485-493, 495; **3**, 2, 21, 50, 62; of inscriptions, **1**, 534; on government pensions to literary men, **2**, 14; on the Madras system in education, **2**, 54, 339, 342; on education of a lawyer, **2**, 105, 106; on education, **2**, 338, 340-348, 417; on the education of girls, **2**, 339; on the Opposition, **2**, 71, 82; on English prose, **2**, 76; on characteristics of men of genius, **2**, 87; on the French people, **1**, 17; **2**, 89; on social conditions, **1**, 136, *et seq.*; **2**, 96, 110, 116, 477; **3**, 302; on the use of Latin, **2**, 153, 179; on liberty of the press, **2**, 163; on distribution of the Scriptures, **2**, 165; on religion, **2**, 214, 215, 448; on translating poetry, **2**, 230; on the Church, **2**, 236, 406; **3**, 50, 70, 95 (*see also* the Catholic Question; the Dissenters); on Art, **2**, 242, 354; **3**, 195; on booksellers, **2**, 246; on the condition of Ireland, **2**, 366-369; **3**, 177, 425; on cheap editions of his poems, **2**, 409, 430, 432, 500; **3**, 225; on the British drama, **2**, 419; on capital punishment, **2**, 463; **3**, 231; on public affairs, **3**, 7, 68; on the Dissenters, **3**, 46, 54, 304; on America, **3**, 53, 229; on the value of criticism, **3**, 72; on the publication of literary remains, **3**, 88; on the mission of a Royal Society, **3**, 147-149, 152-154; on letters and letter writing, **3**, 183; on slavery, **3**, 200; on poet's monuments, **3**, 401-404; on Poor Laws, **3**, 429
- Of Authors and Books:** Horne Tooke, **1**, 81; Southey, 106, 191, 194; **2**, 106; **3**, 408, 428; Peter Bailey, **1**, 162; Sir Joshua Reynolds, 167, 170, 172; Sir Walter Scott, 182, 369, 370; **2**, 57, 58; Francis Beaumont the Younger, **1**, 194; Todd's *Spenser*, 208; Dryden, 208-210; Boccaccio, 210; Thomas Heywood, 370; Crabbe, 376; Coleridge, 382, 487; *Beauty and the Beast*, 515; Sir John Beaumont, 532; Samuel Daniels, 538; John Dyer, 539; **2**, 358; Hazlitt, 34; Lord Byron, 36, 83, 168, 211-213, 242; R. P. Gillies, 36, 38, 39, 51; Hogg, 36, 39, 40, 51; Beattie, 50; Lucien Bonaparte, 52; Virgil, 68, 119-123; John Scott, 69; Gray, 88, 154; Burns, 88; "Barry Cornwall," 145; John Moultrie, 146; Landor, 152-154, 177, 178; English and Scottish Border Poets, 210, 211; Dante, 216; Alaric Watts, 227; Edward Moxon, 296; W. Rowan Hamilton, 312, 313, 382, 397; **3**, 8, 176, 423; Miss Hamilton, **2**, 314, 398; **3**, 177; Collins, **2**, 358; Pope, 359, 428; "Christopher North," 304; "Ossian," 366; Lady Winchelsea, 392, 420, 422-424, 426-428; British poetesses, 421, 428; **3**, 25; Hogarth, **2**, 483; Shirley, **3**, 5; Charles Lamb, 9, 39, 88; English sonnets, 30-33; Rogers's poems, 38; Allan Cunningham, 39, 40; Mrs. Hemans, 59; Chiabrera's epitaphs, 81; Allsop's *Coleridge*, 93; Talfourd's *Ion*, 115; James Montgomery, 116; Edward Quillinan's poetry, 141; Bentley's *Dissertation on Phalaris*, 151; Gillman's *Coleridge*, 165, 166; Mrs. Browning's poems, 169; Chaucer, 219; John Peace's *Apology for Cathedral*s, 219; Gladstone's *State of the Church*, 294; Tennyson, 319; Bernard Barton's poetry, 396; Burns's monument, 401; Francis B. Edgeworth's poems, 423
- Of Artists:** Sir Joshua Reynolds, **1**, 169, 170, 172; Wilkie, 536; Titians, **3**, 9

- Of Public Men:** Fox, **1**, 135 *et seq.*;
Pitt, 216; Nelson, 215; Napoleon,
2, 70; **3**, 408; Wellington, **1**, 440,
444; **2**, 61, 69, 73; **3**, 211
- Wordsworth, William (son of W.W.),
his childhood, **2**, 42, 78, 136, 143,
167, 226, 238, 322; his education,
330, 356, 374; at Bremen, 415,
417; sub-distributor of Stamps,
452, 454, 474; **3**, 21
- *Wrangham, Francis, **1**, 87, 101;
W. W. collaborates with, 87, 93-
98, 102; his writings, 92, 101, 141,
155, 157, 311, 353, 360, 384; offers
seaside cottage to W. W., 353;
assists Green orphans, 377; his
library, **2**, 124.
- Yewdale, Betty, **2**, 117

INDEX OF POEMS OF WORDSWORTH

REFERRED TO IN THESE VOLUMES

NOTE. *For Wordsworth's idea of the classification of many of his poems, see 3, 472-474.*

- Æneid*, translation of parts of the, 2, 119-124, 318, 494
- Beggars, The, 3, 376, 412, 413
- Blind Highland Boy, The, 1, 286; 3, 414
- Borderers, The, 1, 93, 100, 118; 3, 239, 244, 449
- Brothers, The, 1, 136, 138; 3, 437
- Brownies' Cell, The, 2, 464
- Brugès, Incident at, 2, 349
- Burns, Thoughts suggested near residence of, 3, 185
- Celandine, To the Small, 2, 229; 3, 417
- Cuckoo, To the, 3, 418
- Daffodils, The, 1, 306, 318, 330; 2, 229
- Daisy, The, 1, 330; 3, 417
- Descriptive Sketches, 1, 50, 67; 3, 414
- Duty, Ode to, 2, 49
- Elegiac Stanzas (Peele Castle), 1, 195; 3, 419
- Emigrant Mother, The, 3, 416
- Enterprise, To, 2, 200, 288
- Epistle to Sir George Beaumont, 1, 530
- Epitaphs from Chiabrera, 1, 490, 493
- Evening Walk, An, 1, 50, 67
- Excursion, The, 1, 313, 522; 2, 26, 28, 34, 42-47, 52, 54, 56, 61, 117, 180, 237, 268, 287, 303, 420; 3, 48, 112, 118, 215, 223, 244, 265, 419, 457
- Farmer of Tilsbury Vale, The, 3, 165
- Female Vagrant, The, *see* Guilt and Sorrow
- Fleming, To Lady (Rydal Chapel), 2, 193, 201
- Force of Prayer, The, 1, 316
- George and Sarah Green, 1, 347; 3, 465
- Gipsies, 3, 418
- Gleaner, The, 2, 320, 349
- Glow-worm, The, 3, 454
- Goddard, Elegiac Stanzas, 2, 161
- Goody Blake, 2, 228
- Grace Darling, 3, 265-267
- Green Linnet, The, 3, 416
- Guilt and Sorrow, 1, 79, 90, 100; 3, 238
- Happy Warrior, Character of the, 1, 215

490 INDEX OF POEMS OF WORDSWORTH

Highland Girl, To a, **2**, 31, 464
 Idiot Boy, The, **2**, 229; **3**, 416, 437,
 439-442
 Inscription for a monument
 (Southey), **3**, 285, 286, 289
 Inscription for an Orchard Hut, **1**,
 174
 Inscription (Rydal Mount), **2**, 455
 Inscriptions (Coleorton), **1**, 530-
 537
 Installation Ode, **3**, 340
 Intimations of Immortality, Ode on,
2, 43
 Jewish Family, The, **2**, 349
 Juvenal, Imitations of, **1**, 88, 93-98
 Labourer's Noon-Day Hymn, The, **3**,
 292
 Lamb, Charles, Written after the
 death of, **3**, 80-82
 Laodamia, **2**, 50, 214, 480
 Memorials of Tour on Continent, **2**,
 175, 182, 200, 202
 Memorials of Tour in Scotland, **2**,
 186
 Michael, **1**, 131, 133, 136, 138; **3**,
 449
 Morning Exercise, **3**, 417
 Mother's Return, The, **3**, 438
 Peele Castle (Elegiac Stanzas), **1**,
 195; **3**, 419
 Peter Bell, **1**, 329, 331, 333, 339, 431,
 433; **2**, 26; **3**, 419, 449
 Power of Music, The, **1**, 259
 Power of Sound, The, **3**, 150
 Prelude, The **1**, 1, 156, 161, 190, 213;
3, 457, 459, 461, 463
 Recluse, The, ¹ **1**, 115, 158, 164, 171,
 173, 185, 190, 494; **2**, 43, 107, 146,
 180, 237; **3**, 359, 462
 Resolution and Independence, **3**,
 374
 Revolutionists, To (If this great
 world), **3**, 327

Rural Architecture, **3**, 414
 Ruth, **1**, 390; **3**, 415, 437
 Sailor's Mother, The, **3**, 415
 Skylark, To a, **3**, 417
 Sleep, To, **1**, 308
 Snowdrop Rock, **1**, 308
 SONNETS
 Anticipation, **1**, 153
 Composed at ——— Castle, **1**,
 153
 Dyer, To the Poet, John, **1**,
 539
 Eagles, **2**, 466
 Ecclesiastical Sonnets, **2**, 171, 175,
 176; **3**, 241, 265, 303
 Gillies, Robert Pearce, **2**, 35
 Gravestone, A (Worcester Cathed-
 ral), **2**, 351
 Haydon, To B. R. (High is our
 calling), **2**, 64; (Picture of
 Napoleon), **2**, 447; (Picture of
 Wellington), **3**, 206-210, 230
 Kent, To the Men of, **1**, 153
 Lady E. B., To (A stream to
 mingle), **2**, 222
 Liberty, To, **1**, 304
 Michael Angelo, From the Italian
 of, **1**, 197, 355
 Moscow, **2**, 194
 November 1 (How clear, how
 keen), **2**, 64
 Painter, To a (Miss Gillies's
 portrait of Mrs. Wordsworth),
3, 199
 Picture, Upon the Sight of a
 Beautiful, **1**, 528
 Punishment of Death, Upon the,
3, 182, 197, 230, 239
 Scott, On the Departure of, **2**,
 502
 September, 1815 (While not a
 leaf), **2**, 64
 Southey, To, **3**, 173
 Torrent at Devil's Ridge, To the,
2, 224
 Westminster Bridge, **3**, 109
 With Ships the Sea was Sprinkled,
1, 306

¹ See also The Recluse.

² Nidpath Castle.

³ See also The Prelude.

- Southey (Inscription for a monument), **3**, 285, 286, 289
 Spade of a Friend, To the, **1**, 321
 Star-Gazers, **1**, 262
 Stepping Westward, **1**, 214

 Thanksgiving Ode, **2**, 72, 75, 79
 Thorn, The, **1**, 187; **3**, 438
 Tintern Abbey, Lines composed a few miles above, **1**, 162, 288
 Triad, The, **2**, 320, 349; **3**, 108, 411
 Waggoner, The, **1**, 431; **2**, 26

 Westmoreland Girl, The, **3**, 321, 322
 White Doe of Rylstone, The, **1**, 156, 324, 329, 338, 343, 353, 355, 357, 358, 431, 433, 487, 494; **2**, 25, 26, 62, 68, 94, 126; **3**, 142, 399, 465-467
 Wishing Gate, The, **2**, 320, 349

 Yarrow Unvisited, **1**, 177
 Yarrow Visited, **2**, 34, 37
 Yarrow Revisited, **2**, 502; **3**, 16, 22, 239, 255

INDEX OF CORRESPONDENTS

NOTE. *Where the authorship is not specifically stated, the letters are written by William Wordsworth.*

ALFORD, HENRY, **3**, 191, 292

ARNOLD, THOMAS, **2**, 502

BARKER, E. H., **2**, 365

BARRETT, ELIZABETH, *see* BROWNING

BARTON, BERNARD, **3**, 396

BEAUMONT, SIR GEORGE, **1**, 151, 166, 169, 171, 172, 179, 185, 188, 192, 195, 198, 212, 215, 232, 238, 241, 256, 329, 347, 523, 531, 533; **2**, 48, 137, 220, 256; **3**, 382, 385, 387

BEAUMONT, SIR GEORGE (son of preceding), **2**, 379, 393, 444; **3**, 63

BEAUMONT, LADY, **1**, 220, 271, 290, 301, 497, 536; (*from Dorothy Wordsworth*), **1**, 221, 222, 224, 227, 229, 234, 236, 243, 246, 260, 263, 268, 270, 288, 293, 316, 325, 332, 337, 354, 371, 484, 491, 499; **2**, 218; (*from Mary Wordsworth*), **2**, 201, 232

BEAUMONT, LADY (the younger), **3**, 29; (*from Dorothy Wordsworth*), **3**, 34, 36

BENTINCK, LADY FREDERICK, **2**, 468, 506; **3**, 187, 204, 212, 213, 267, 298

BIGGS AND COTTLE, **1**, 129, 130, 132

BIGGS, MR., Printer, **1**, 128

[BROWNING] ELIZABETH BARRETT, **3**, 251, 307

BRYDGES, SIR EGERTON (*from Edward Quillinan*), **3**, 41

CALVERT, WILLIAM, **1**, 76

CHANTREY, FRANCIS, **2**, 157

- CLARKE, ROBERT G. (*memorandum of a letter to*), 3, 224
- CLARKSON, MRS., 2, 3, 8, 40, 60, 62; 3, 335; (*from Dorothy Wordsworth*), 1, 145, 150, 154, 157, 158, 164, 165, 166, 171, 176, 183, 184, 192, 210, 211, 218, 249, 266, 298, 312, 322, 334, 343, 351, 368, 380, 388, 415, 460, 475, 479, 495, 499, 503, 507, 514, 519, 522, 540; 2, 4, 10, 12, 17, 21, 24, 25, 26, 34, 55, 61, 64, 66, 78, 85, 93, 97, 107, 117, 127, 135, 140, 146, 150, 169, 189, 207, 254, 417, 450; 3, 61; (*from Mary Wordsworth*), 1, 286
- COLERIDGE, DERWENT, 3, 325
- COLERIDGE, HENRY NELSON, 3, 57
- COLERIDGE, JOHN TAYLOR, 3, 214, 253, 271, 272, 285, 289, 347
- COLERIDGE, SAMUEL TAYLOR, 3, 369, 445, 451, 453, 459, 462, 464, 468; (*from Dorothy Wordsworth*), 3, 452, 453, 456, 460; (*from Mary Wordsworth*), 3, 460
- COLERIDGE, SARA (*from Dorothy Wordsworth*), 3, 401; (*from Mary Wordsworth*), 3, 327
- CORRESPONDENT UNKNOWN, 1, 458, 464; 2, 32, 44, 45, 95, 115, 116, 167, 168, 278, (*to an English prelate*) 336, 360, 366, 478; 3, 93, 112, 156, 166, 268, 297, 311, 313, 355, (*to some friends*) 374, 377, 390, 401; (*from Dorothy Wordsworth*), 1, 59, 109, 110, 112, 113; 2, 47; 3, 142, 361; (*from Mary Wordsworth*), 3, 353; (*from Edward Quillinan*), 3, 257, 262
- COTTLE, AMOS, 1, 116
- COTTLE, JOSEPH, 1, 112, 121, 122, 130; 2, 360; 3, 271, 285, 329, 356, 357, 360, 361, 362, 364, 367
- COTTLE, *see also* BIGGS AND COTTLE
- CRACKANTHORP, MRS., 1, 62
- CUNNINGHAM, ALLAN, 2, 184, 204, 207, 323, 325, 326, 329, 352, 356; 3, 40, 51, 72
- DANA, RICHARD HENRY, 3, 281
- DAVY, SIR HUMPHRY, 1, 123
- DE LA WARR, EARL, 3, 266, 269

- DE QUINCEY, THOMAS, 1, 147, 159, 163, 300, 301, 358, 390, 398, 405, 412, 421, 434, 440, 443, 445, 451; 2, 12, 49; (*from Dorothy Wordsworth*), 1, 391, 394, 416, 420, 429, 435, 465, 468, 469, 478, 482; 2, 9, 293; (*from Sara Hutchinson*), 1, 442, 447; (*from Mary Wordsworth*), 1, 452, 473, 477
- DOCKRAY, BENJAMIN, 2, 335; 3, 200
- DYCE, ALEXANDER, 2, 358, 392, 419, 426; 3, 1, 5, 14, 24, 30, 150, 223, 420
- EDGEWORTH, FRANCIS BEAUFORT, 2, 401
- ENGLISH PRELATE, AN, 2, 336
- FENWICK, ISABELLA, 3, 198
- FIELD, BARRON, 2, 351, 359, 381; (*a marginal note*), 3, 121, 188, 412
- FLETCHER, J., 2, 240, 244, 248, 307
- FOX, CHARLES JAMES, 1, 135
- GARDNER, JOHN, 2, 409, 429, 435, 497; 3, 43
- GILLIES, ROBERT PEARCE, 2, 34, 36, 38, 50, 57, 79, 80, 94, 108
- GLADSTONE, WILLIAM EWART, 3, 159, 167, 246, 247, 250, 294
- GODWIN, MRS. CATHERINE GRACE, 2, 402
- GODWIN, WILLIAM, 1, 515
- GOMM, SIR WILLIAM M., 3, 48, 260, 337
- GORDON, GEORGE HUNTLEY, 2, 383, 410, 424, 442; 3, 411, 426, 427, 429
- GRAHAME, ROBERT, 1, 382
- HAMILTON, ELIZABETH (*from Dorothy Wordsworth*), 2, 446; (*from Dora Wordsworth*), 2, 464
- HAMILTON, SIR WILLIAM ROWAN, 2, 312, 381, 384, 385, 397, 434, 436, 440, 443, 446, 466, 470, 497; 3, 3, 7, 94, 96, 147, 152, 176, 270, 334, 423; (*from Dorothy Wordsworth*), 2, 446

- HANDLEY, EDWIN HILL, 2, 437
HAYDON, BENJAMIN ROBERT, 2, 63, 447; 3, 195, 205, 207, 208, 210, 333
HAYWARD, ABRAHAM, 2, 354
HEMANS, MRS. FELICIA, 2, 507; 3, 16, 44, 59
HERAUD, JOHN ABRAHAM, 2, 439

KENYON, JOHN, 2, 129, 132, 142, 154, 197, 204, 308, 381, 454, 481, 483; 3, 17, 109, 169, 180; (*from Dorothy Wordsworth*), 2, 136, 225, 230; (*from Mary Wordsworth*), 2, 165; 3, 169

LAMB, CHARLES, 2, 405; 3, 9; (*from Dorothy Wordsworth*), 2, 406
LAMB, CHARLES AND MARY (*from Dorothy Wordsworth*), 3, 432
LANDOR, WALTER SAVAGE, 2, 152, 179, 214, 235
LAWRENCE, MRS. (*from Dora Wordsworth*), 2, 502
LEITCH, DAVID, 3, 343
LONSDALE, THE EARL OF, 1, 238; 2, 1, 13, 25, 110, 111, 113, 115, 116, 118, 119, 123, 162, 229, 258, 259, 314, 315, 316, 407, 485, 488, 494; 3, 143, 395, 405
LOSH, JAMES, 3, 358
LOWTHER, VISCOUNT, 2, 33, 130, 147, 149, 177

MACKENZIE, R. SHELTON, 3, 103
MAHON, LORD, 3, 221
MARSHALL, MISS (*from Dora Wordsworth*), 3, 90
MARSHALL, MRS., née JANE POLLARD (*from Dorothy Wordsworth*), 1, 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9, 10, 11, 20, 21, 23, 28, 36, 40, 41, 46, 48, 51, 52, 54, 55, 60, 85, 90, 99, 104, 119, 124, 183, 314, 315, 341, 342, 357, 386, 480, 489; 2, 15, 16, 105, 107, 185, 275, 353, 389; 3, 376, 392; (*from Mary Wordsworth*), 3, 89, 90, 103, 149
MATHEWS, WILLIAM, 1, 24, 30, 33, 37, 42, 57, 65, 68, 77, 81, 84, 106
MILLER, J. K., 2, 475

- MONKHOUSE, THOMAS (*from Dorothy Wordsworth*), 2, 112
 MONTAGU, BASIL, 2, 14, 58, 306, 408, 463, 479; 3, 28, 87, 307
 MONTGOMERY, JAMES, 2, 217; 3, 116
 MONTGOMERY, ROBERT, 3, 72
 MORPETH, LORD, 3, 194
 MOULTRIE, JOHN, 3, 317
 MOXON, EDWARD, 2, 296, 432, 445, 450, 501; 3, 17, 28, 39, 55, 59, 68, 80, 82, 83, 86, 88, 91, 93, 96, 97, 118, 120, 123, 156, 164, 169, 170, 172, 189, 192, 197, 215, 222, 230, 232, 238, 241, 243, 252, 253, 255, 259, 287, 293, 301, 312, 313, 315, 326, 328, 330, 336, 337, 405; (*from Mary Wordsworth*), 3, 350
 NICHOL, JOHN PRINGLE, 3, 342; (*from Edward Quillinan*), 3, 352
 NORTH, CHRISTOPHER, *see* JOHN WILSON
 PARRY, CHARLES HENRY, 3, 202
 PEACE, JOHN, 3, 184, 219, 224, 226, 229, 240, 254, 300, 344
 PEARSON, WILLIAM, 2, 185, 283, 509; (*from Dorothy Wordsworth*), 2, 267, 283, 327, 328, 407, 425, 434, 461; (*from Dora Wordsworth*), 2, 504
 PEEL, SIR ROBERT, 3, 160, 161, 269
 PHILOLOGICAL MUSEUM, THE EDITOR OF THE, 2, 494
 PHIPPS, C. B., 3, 339
 POLLARD, JANE, *see* MRS. MARSHALL
 POLLARD, MRS. (*from Dorothy Wordsworth*), 3, 45
 POOLE, THOMAS, 1, 116, 142, 455; 2, 28, 52; (*from Dorothy Wordsworth*), 3, 365
 QUILLINAN, EDWARD, 3, 140, 225, 233, 235; (*from Sara Hutchinson*), 2, 459; (*from Mary Wordsworth*), 2, 203; (*from Dora Wordsworth*), 2, 394; 3, 64
 QUILLINAN, MRS. EDWARD, *see* DORA WORDSWORTH
 REED, HENRY, 3, 139, 179, 184, 211, 217, 226, 229, 241, 248, 249, 263, 274, 283, 302, 309, 318, 321, 323, 331, 333; (*from Mary Wordsworth*), 3, 310

REYNOLDS, F. MANSEL, **2**, 349

ROBINSON, HENRY, **2**, 386

ROBINSON, MRS. HENRY, **3**, 290

ROBINSON, HENRY CRABB, **2**, 90, 102, 104, 141, 143, 284, 285, 289, 291, 302, 330, 362, 369, 377, 499; **3**, 2, 6, 10, 11, 21, 45, 53, 61, 73, 76, 77, 79, 99, 101, 103, 105, 107, 124, 126, 127, 144, 171, 183, 196, 304, 305, 306; (*from Dorothy Wordsworth*), **1**, 500; **2**, 134, 158, 166, 169, 181, 192, 217, 231, 236, 239, 251, 260, 269, 271, 280, 297, 300, 303, 304, 332, 372, 375, 411, 471; **3**, 57, 63; (*from Mary Wordsworth*), **3**, 23, 62, 85, 98, 104, 112, 118; (*from Dora Wordsworth*), **3**, 55, 101; (*from Edward Quillinan*), **3**, 273, 275, 280, 288, 293, 299, 346, 348, 349, 350

ROGERS, H., **3**, 75

ROGERS, SAMUEL, **1**, 375; **2**, 31, 98, 187, 242, 243, 246; **3**, 38; (*from Dorothy Wordsworth*), **2**, 199, 202

ROSE, HUGH JAMES, **2**, 337, 340

SCOTT, JOHN, **2**, 60, 69, 72, 74, 76, 81, 84, 86

SCOTT, SIR WALTER, **1**, 176, 182, 207, 255, 286, 300, 358, 369; **2**, 151, 432, 449, 457; **3**, 378

SHARP, RICHARD, **1**, 181, 350, 355, 378; **2**, 175, 188, 191, 196; **3**, 380, 394

SOUTHEY, KATE (*from Mary Wordsworth*), **3**, 342

SOUTHEY, ROBERT, **1**, 511; **2**, 23, 83; **3**, 76, 128, 178, 384, 398, 400, 408, 435

STANGER, JAMES, **3**, 430

STANGER, JOSHUA, **3**, 237

STUART, DANIEL, **1**, 393, 414, 424, 448, 449, 454; **2**, 11, 96, 100, 105, 114; **3**, 165

TALFOURD, THOMAS NOON, **3**, 65, 115, 180, 245

TAYLOR, HENRY, **2**, 211, 444, 495; **3**, 33, 49, 51, 66, 182, 230

TAYLOR, JOHN, **2**, 324

TAYLOR, T., 2, 296

THELWALL, MRS., 3, 170

THRELKELD, ELIZABETH (*from Dorothy Wordsworth*),
2, 15

TOBIN, JAMES, 1, 114

WALMSLEY, T. ATTWOOD, 3, 339

WATTS, ALARIC, 2, 227, 264, 265, 266, 268, 279, 291, 496;
(*from Mary Wordsworth*), 2, 276

WILKINSON, THOMAS, 1, 320

WILLIAMSON, D. S., 3, 306

WILSON, JOHN ("CHRISTOPHER NORTH"), 2, 131; 3, 435

WORDSWORTH, CHRISTOPHER (Master of Trinity; brother
of William), 2, 317, 355, 386, 390, 416, 480; 3, 187,
227; (*from Dorothy Wordsworth*), 1, 181

WORDSWORTH, CHRISTOPHER (son of the Master of Trinity),
3, 13, 49, 231, 258, 316, 341, 409

WORDSWORTH, DORA (MRS. EDWARD QUILLINAN), 2, 319;
3, 133, 173, 197, 243; (*from her cousin John Words-*
worth), 2, 459

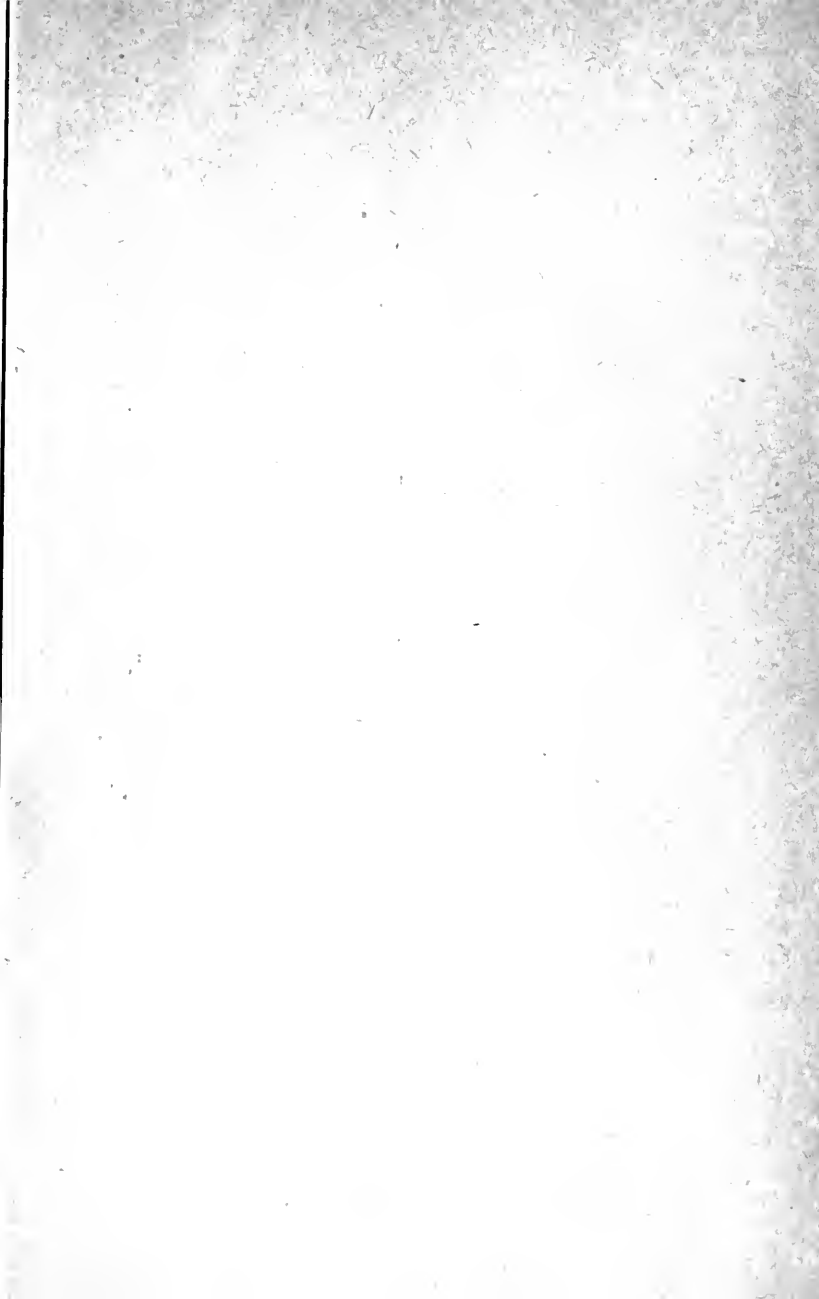
WORDSWORTH, DOROTHY, 1, 11; 3, 130, 132, 135, 368,
428

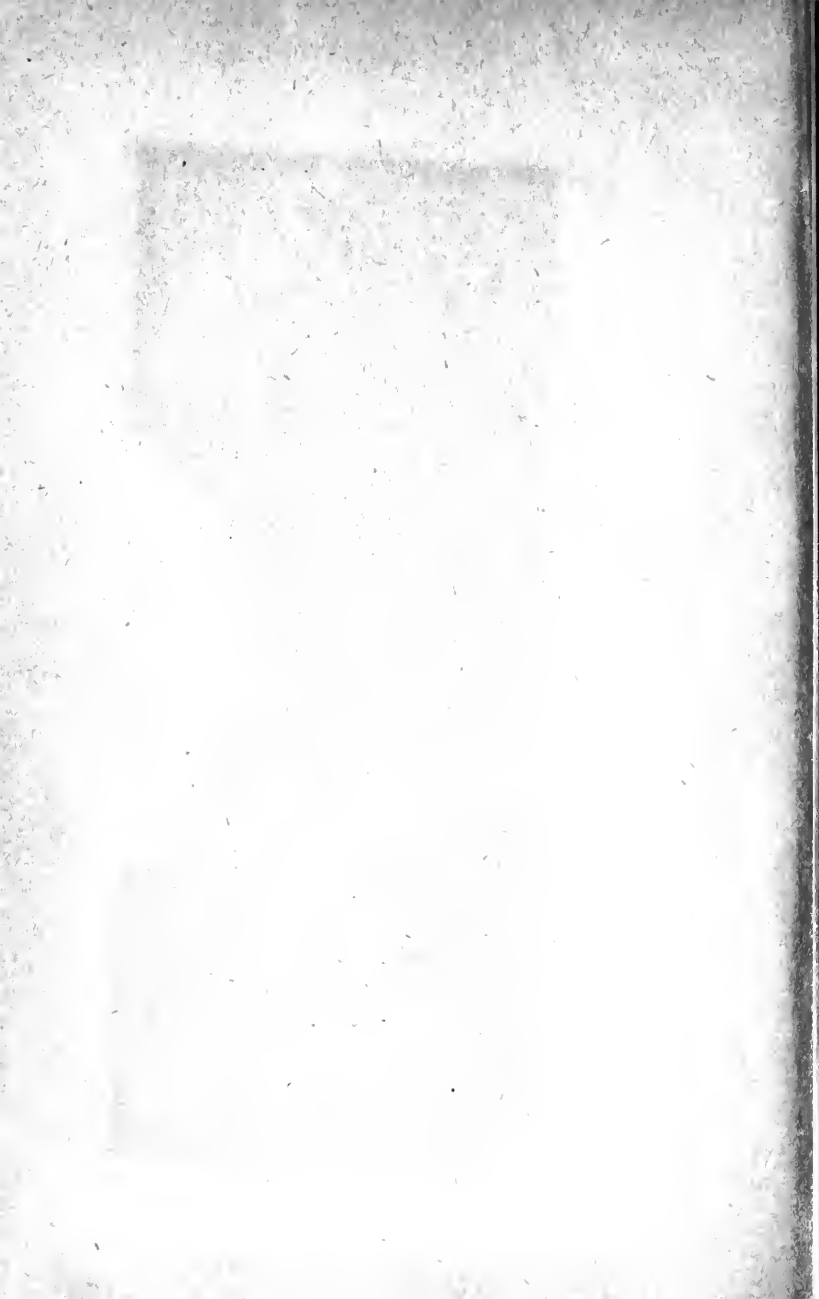
WORDSWORTH, JOHN (son of Wordsworth's elder brother
Richard), 3, 26, 157

WORDSWORTH, MARY, 2, 319; 3, 129, 133, 136, 137

WORDSWORTH, WILLIAM (*from his brother John Words-*
worth), 1, 177

WRANGHAM, FRANCIS, 1, 87, 92, 101, 140, 155, 252, 310,
317, 352, 359, 377, 384, 426, 518; 2, 19, 28, 67, 124, 127,
164; 3, 68; (*from Dorothy Wordsworth*), 1, 103





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Letters

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